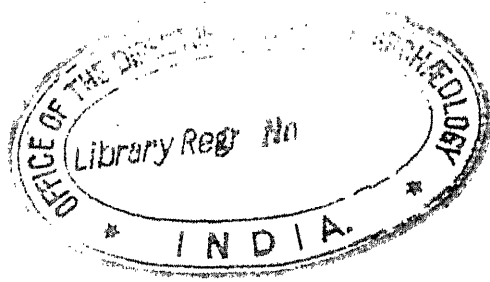


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संवत सोरह से इकतीसा
करीं कथा हरि पद धरि सीसा



THE
RAMAYANA
OF
TULSI DÁS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL HINDI

BY

F. S. GROWSE, B. C. S.;

M.A., OXON.; C.I.E.;

FELLOW OF THE CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY.

FIFTH EDITION
IN THREE VOLUMES.

REVISED AND CORRECTED

"The Ramayan of Tulsi Das is more popular and more honoured by the people of the North Western Provinces than the Bible is by the corresponding classes in England."

GRIFFITH.

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कहिहिहि सुनिहिहि समभसवेता
कलिमल रहत सुमंगलभागी

जो यह कथा सनेह समेता
होइहिहि राम चरन अनुगामी

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सुनत अवन पाइय विआभा
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राम चरित मानस यह नामा
मन करि विषय अनलबन जर हो



संवत सोरह से प्रसी प्रसी गंग के तीर
आवण शुकुसत्तमी तुलसी तज्यो श्रीर



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INTRODUCTION.

The Sanskrit Rámáyana of Válmíki has been published more than once, with all the advantages of European editorial skill and the most luxurious typography. It has also been translated both in verse and prose, and, in part at least, into Latin, as well as into Italian, French and English. The more popular Hindi presentment of the same great national Epic can only be read in lithograph or bazár print,¹ and—with the exception of a single Book—has never till now been translated in any form into any language whatever. Yet it is no unworthy rival of its more fortunate predecessor. There can, of course, be no comparison between the polished phraseology of classical Sanskrit and the rough colloquial idiom of Tulsi Dás's vernacular; while the antiquity of Válmíkis poem further invests it with an adventitious interest for the student of Indian history. But, on the other hand, the Hindi poem is the best and most trustworthy guide to the popular living faith of the Hindu race at the present day—a matter of not less practical interest than the creed of their remote ancestors—and its language, which in the course of three centuries has contracted a tinge of archaism, is a study of much importance to the philologist, as helping to bridge the chasm between the modern tongue and the mediæval. It is also less wordy and diffuse than the Sanskrit original and, probably in consequence of its modern date, is less disfigured by wearisome interpolations and repetitions; while, if it never soars so high as Válmíki in some of his best passages, it maintains a more equable level of poetic diction, and seldom sinks with him into such dreary depths of unmitigated prose. It must also be noted that it is in no sense a translation of the earlier work: the general plan and the management of the incidents are necessarily much the same, but there is a difference in the touch in every detail; and the two poems vary as widely as any two dramas on the same mythological subject by two different Greek tragedians. Even the coincidence of name is an accident; for Tulsi Dás himself called his poem 'the Rám-charit-mánas,' and the shorter title, corresponding in character to 'the Iliad' or 'Æneid,' has only been substituted by his admirers as a handier designation for a popular favourite.

¹ A handsome edition of the text was issued from the press of the Baptist Mission in Calcutta many years ago; but it has long been out of print, and the only copy I have ever seen of it was the one in use at the college of Fort William in 1861. I had thus entirely forgotten the fact till reminded of it by Mr. Bate, a gentleman who has ably maintained the scholarly reputation of the Mission by his very useful Hindi Dictionary.

However, the opinion that the more modern poem is a close adaptation, or *ri-faccimento*, of the Sanskrit original is very widely entertained, not only by European scholars but also by Hindus themselves. For, among the latter, an orthodox pandit is essentially *homo unius libri*, to whom the idea of comparative criticism is altogether strange and unintelligible. Whatever is written in the one book, to which he pins his faith, is for him the absolute truth, which he positively declines to weaken or obscure by a reference to any other authority. If he can understand Válmíki's Sanskrit, he despises Tulsi Dás as a vulgarian and would not condescend to read a line of him ; if he knows only Hindi, he accepts the modern poem with as implicit faith as if it were an immemorial shás-tra, and accounts a quotation from his Rámáyana an unanswerable argument on any disputed topic. Thus, in all probability, the only educated Hindus who have much acquaintance with both poems are the professors and students of Government colleges, whose views have been broadened by European influence. It may, therefore, be of interest to show a little more at length how great is the divergence between the two poems.

In both, the first Book brings the narrative precisely to the same point, *viz.*, the marriage of Ráma and Síta. With Tulsi Dás this is much the longest book of the seven, and forms all but a third of the complete work ; in the Sanskrit, on the contrary, it is the shortest but one, even after including the first four cantos, which are obviously a late addition. They give a table of contents, and explain how Válmíki learnt the story from Nárad, and taught it to Kusa and Lava ; thus corresponding in no respect, with Tulsi Dás's introduction. The actual poem commences at once, without any prelude, with a description of Ayodhyá and its King Dasarath and his ministers, and of his longing for an heir ; and tells how Rishyasring, Vibhandak's son (whose previous adventures are recorded at length) was invited from the palace of his father-in-law, Lomápád, the king of Champá, to direct the ceremonies of a great sacrifice, which the childless Dasarath resolved to celebrate, in the hope of thereby obtaining his desire. The gods, being at that time sorely distressed by Rávan's persecution, had fled to Vishnu for succour ; and he, in answer to their prayer, became incarnate in the four sons that were born to the king, while inferior divinities took birth as bears and monkeys. The four princes are named by Vasishta. They grow up, and the king is thinking where to find suitable brides for them, when Visvamitra comes, and, after a long colloquy, takes away with him Ráma and Lakshman to protect him at

the time of sacrifice from the demons that persistently assail him. On the way they pass by the Anga hermitage, where the god of love had been reduced to ashes by Siva—a legend to which very brief allusion is made,—them through the forest of Táraká, whom Ráma meets in battle and slays, but not till her genealogy has been fully recorded. He is then invested by the saint with certain heavenly weapons and magical powers, and, arriving at Visvamitra's hermitage, he slays the demons Mária and Subáhu. Being told of Janak's bow-sacrifice, he resolves to attend it; and as he crosses the Son and the Ganges on his way thither, Visvamitra entertains him with a prolix account of his own descent from King Kusa, of the birth of Ganga, the legend of the sons of Sagar and his sacrifice, and how his descendant Bhagirath brought down the Ganges from heaven and concludes with the genealogy of the kings of Visála. As they draw near to Mithilá, Ráma delivers Gautam's wife Ahalyá, whose legend is given with all its circumstances. He is welcomed by Janak and by Ahalyá's son, Satánanda, and the latter makes a long speech of eight hundred lines, in which he gives a complete history of the contention between Visvamitra and Vasishtha, with an account of Trisanku and Sunahsepha and Ambarísha and of Visvamitra's final promotion to Bráhmanical rank. Janak shows Ráma the bow in its case, and he then and there takes it up and snaps it in pieces. The royal suitors had all tried in vain, and after fruitlessly besieging the city, with intent to carry off Sita by force, had returned dis comforted to their own realms. Envoys are despatched to Ayodhyá for King Dasarath; Kusa-dhvaj, Janak's brother, is also summoned from Sankasya: and then in full conclave Vasishtha proclaims Ráma's pedigree, after which Janak recites his own. The fourfold nuptials then take place, a hundred thousand cows being given to the Bráhmans in the name of each of the brides, and many precious gifts being bestowed in dowry. Dasarath then takes his way home with his sons and daughters, but is met by Parasurám with Vishnu's bow, which Ráma strings at once, and the son of Bhrigu acknowledges his supremacy. They then reach Ayodhyá, whence Bharat soon departs with his uncle, Yudhajit, on a visit to his mother's father, Kekaya.

On comparing the above sketch with my translation of the corresponding portion of the Hindi poem, it will be seen that the two agree only in the broadest outline. The episodes so freely introduced by both poets are, for the most part, entirely dissimilar; and even in the main narrative some of the most important incidents, such as the breaking of the bow and the contention with Parasurám, are differently placed

and assume a very altered complexion. In other passages where the story follows the same lines, whatever Válmíki has condensed—as, for example, the description of the marriage festivities—Tulsi Dás has expanded ; and wherever the elder poet has lingered longest, his successor has hastened on most rapidly.

In the seventh, or last, Book, the divergence is, if anything, still more marked. It consists with Válmíki of 124 cantos, the first 49 of which are occupied by a dialogue between Ráma and the Rishi Agastya, who relates the story of Rávan's birth and his conquest of the world. In the 50th canto Ráma dismisses his monkey followers to their homes: and it is only in this one passage and in occasional reference to the glory and happiness of Ráma's reign that there is any coincidence with the Hindi 'Sequel.' The remainder of the Sanskrit poem relates the exile of Sita and the Asvamedh sacrifice ; after which Ráma and his brothers ascend to heaven. All these topics are totally omitted by Tulsi Dás, who substitutes for them the story of Káka-bhusundi and a series of laboured disquisitions on the true nature of Faith.

The earliest notice of our author, as, indeed, of all the other celebrated Vaishnava writers who flourished about the same period, *viz.*, the 16th and 17th century A.D., is to be found in the Bhakt-Málá, or 'Legends of the Saints,' one of the most difficult works in the Hindi language. Its composition is invariably ascribed to Nábhá Jí, himself one of the leaders of the reform which had its centre at Brindá-ban ; but the poem, as we now have it, was avowedly edited, if not entirely written, by one of his disciples named Náráyan Dás who lived during the reign of Sháhjahán. A single stanza is all that is ordinarily devoted to each personage, who is panegyrized with reference to his most salient characteristics in a style that might be described as of unparalleled obscurity, were it not that each such separate portion of the text is followed by a *tika*, or gloss, written by one Priya Dás in the *sambat* year 1769 (1713 A.D.) in which confusion is still worse confounded by a series of the most disjointed and inexplicit allusions to different legendary events in the saint's life. The poem has never been printed, and though it is of the very highest repute among modern Vaishnavas, and is, therefore, not rare in MS. either at Mathurá or Brindá-ban, it is utterly unintelligible to ordinary native readers. The text of the passage referring to Tulsi Dás is therefore, here given, and is followed by a literal English translation :—

॥ मूल ॥

कलि कुटिल जीव निस्तार हेत बाळ्मीक तुलसी भयो ॥
 चेतो काव्य निबंध करिब सत कोटि रामायण ॥
 इक अक्षर उडरै ब्रह्महतयादि करि जिन होत पारायण ॥
 अब भक्तनि सुख दें बहुरि वपु धरि लीला बिस्तारी ॥
 राम चरन रसमत्त रटत अह निस व्रतधारी ॥
 संसार अपार के पार को सुगम रूप नौका लियो ॥
 कलि कुटिल जीव निस्तार हेत बाळ्मीक तुलसी भयो ॥

Translation of the text of Nibhā Ji.

For the redemption of mankind in this perverse Kali Yug, Válmiki has been born again as Tulsī. The verses of the Rámáyana composed in the Treta Yug are a hundred crores in number ; but a single letter has redeeming power, and would work the salvation of one who had even committed the murder of a Bráhmaṇ. Now again, as a blessing to the faithful, has he taken birth and published the sportive actions of the god. Intoxicated with his passion for Ráma's feet, he perseveres day and night in the accomplishment of his vow, and has supplied, as it were, a boat for the easy passage of the boundless ocean of existence. For the redemption of man in this perverse Kali Yug, Válmiki has been born again as Tulsī.

॥ टीका ॥

तिया सो सनेह बिन पूछैं पिता गेह गई
 भूली सुधि देह भजे बाहो ठौर आए हैं ॥
 बधू अति लाज भई रिसि सों निकसि गई
 प्रीति राम नई तन हाड़ चाम छाए हैं ॥
 सुनी जब बात मानों होय गयो प्रात वह
 पाछे पछितात तजी कासीपुरी धाए हैं ॥
 कियो तहो बास प्रभू सेवा लै प्रकास
 कीनों दृढ़ भाव नैन रूप के तिसाए हैं ॥
 सौच जल सेस पाय भूतहू बिसेस कोऊ
 बोल्हो सुख मानि हनुमान जू बताए हैं ॥

रामायन कथा सो रसायन है कोननि की
 आवत प्रथम पाछैं जात घृना छाए हैं ॥
 जाय पहिचान संग चले छर आनि आए
 बन मधि जानि धाय पाय लपटाए हैं ॥
 करैं सीतकार कहि सकोगे न टारि मैं तो
 जाने रससार रूप धर्यो जैसे गाये हैं ॥
 मांगि लीजै बर कहि दीजै राम भूप रूप
 अतिही अनूप नित नैन अभिलाखिये ॥
 कियो लै संकेत वाञ्छो दिन ही सौं लाग्यो हेत
 आई सोई समै चेत कब कबि चाखिये ॥
 आये रघुनाथ साथ लछिमन चढ़े घेरे
 पट रंग बोरै हरै कैसे मन राखिये ॥
 पाछैं हनुमान आय बोले देखे प्रान प्यारे
 नैकु न निहारे मैं तो भले फेरि भाखिये ॥
 हतया करि बिप्र एक तोरथ करत आयो
 कहै मुख राम भिक्षा डारिये हत्यारे को ॥
 सुनि अभिराम नाम धाम में बुलाय लियो
 दियो लै प्रसाद कियो सुद्ध गायो प्यारे कीं ॥
 भई दिजसभा कहि बोलि कै पठाए आप
 कैसें गये पाप संग लैके जिये न्यारे कीं ॥
 पोथो तुम बांचो हिये सार नहीं सांचो अजू
 ताते मत काचो दूर करै न अंधारे कीं ॥
 देखि पोथो बांच नाम महिमाह कही सांच
 अपै हत्याकरै कैसे तर कहि दीजिये ॥
 आवै जो प्रतीत कही योही याके हाथ जेवें
 सिवजू को बैल तब पंगति में लिजिये ॥
 थार में प्रसाद दियो चले जहाँ पन कियो
 बोले आप नाम के प्रताप मति भीजिये ॥

जैसी तुम जानों तैसी कैसैकै बखानीं अहो
 सुनिकै प्रसन्न पायो जै जै धुनि रोजिये ॥
 आये निस चार चोरी करन हरन धन
 देखे श्यामघन हांथ चोप सर लिये हैं ॥
 जब जब आवे बान सांधि डरपावै वे तो
 अति मंडरावै अपैं बली दूरें किये हैं ॥
 भौर आय पूछैं अजू सांवरो किसोर कोन
 सुनि करि मौन रहै आंसू डारि दिये हैं ॥
 दई सबै लुटाय जानी चौकी रामराय दई
 लई उन्हें दीक्षा सीक्षा सब भये हिये हैं ॥
 कियो तन बिप्र तयाग लागि चली संग तिया
 दूरही तें देखि किया चरन प्रनाम है ॥
 बाली यों सुहागवती मार्यो पति होउ सती
 अब तो निकस गई ज्वाऊ सेवो राम है ॥
 बालि कै कुटुंब कही जो पै भक्ति करो सही
 गही तब बात जीव दियो अभिराम है ॥
 भये सब साधु बगधि मेटी लै विमुख ताकी
 जाको बास रहै तो न सूझे संगम धाम है ॥
 दिक्षोपति पातसाह अहदी पठायो लैग
 ताकीं सो सुनायो सू वे बिप्र ज्वायो जानिये ॥
 देखिवे की चाहै नीकैं सुख सों निबाहैं आप
 कहि बहु विनय गहि चले मन आनिये ॥
 पहुंचे नृपति पास आदर प्रकास कियो
 सब आसन लै बाल्यो मृदू बानियें ॥
 दीजै करामाति जग ख्याति सब मात किये
 कही भूठ बात एक राम पहिचानिये ॥

देखें रोम कैसे कहि कैदि किये किये हिये
 हजिये कृपाल हनुमान जू दयाल है ॥
 ताही समय फैलि गए कोटि कोटि कपि नये
 लोचें तन खैचें चीर भयो यों बिहाल है ॥
 फोरैं कोट मारैं चोट किये डारें लोट पोट
 लीजि कोन ओट जानि मानों प्रलै काल है ॥
 भई तब आखैं दुखसागर को चाखैं अब
 वेई हमें राखैं भाखैं वारों धन माल है ॥
 आय पाय लिये तुम दिये हम प्राण पावें
 आप समझावें करामात नेकु लीजिये ॥
 लाज दबि गया नृप तब राखि लीयो कह्यो
 भयो घर रामजू को बेगि छोड़ दीजिये ॥
 सुनि तजि दियो और करयो लैके कोट नयो
 अबह न रहै कोज वामें तन छीजिये ॥
 कासी जाय हन्दावन आय मिले नाभाजू सों
 सुन्यो है कबित्त निज रोभि मति भोजिये ॥
 मदन गोपालजू कीं दरसन करि कहि
 सही राम इष्ट मेरे दृष्टि भाव पागी है ॥
 वैसेई सरूप कियो लै दियो दिखाय रूप
 मन अनरूप छवि देखि नीकी लागी है ॥
 काह् कही कृष्ण अवतारोजू प्रसंस मद्हा
 राम अंस सुनि बोले मति अनुरागी है ॥
 दसरथ सुत जानी सुन्दर अनूप मानों
 ईसता बताई रति बीस गुनी जागी है ॥

Translation of the gloss (or supplement) by Priya Dās.

He had great love for his wife : without asking his leave she went home to her father's ; he forgot all about himself and hastened there too. She was greatly ashamed, and went away in anger, saying :—"Have you no love for Rāma? My body is but a framework of skin and bone." When he heard these words, it was, as it were, the daybreak ; he felt compunction and left her and sped to the city of Kāśi. There he made his abode, worshipping the lord publicly, making a rigid vow, and thirsting exceedingly for a vision.

A certain ghost, who had secured the remainder of the water he had used in washing, was grateful and told him of Hanumán. "A recitation of the Rāmáyana has a special charm for his ears ; he will be disguised in mean attire, but is always the first to come and the last to leave." Thus recognizing him as he left, he went with him in full confidence, and in the wood, knowing him to be in truth the god, ran and embraced his feet, crying with a shout of joy :—"You shall not escape me." Perceiving his intense devotion, he assumed the form in which he is famous, and said :—"Ask of me what you will." "I am ever craving to behold with my very eyes the incomparable beauty of King Rāma." He told him the place for meeting. From that day forth he was longing till the time came, thinking :—"When shall I behold his beauty?" Raghunāth came, and with him Lakshman, both mounted on horseback, in green raiment (like huntsmen). Why should he notice them? Afterwards came Hanumán and said :—"Have you seen your dear lord?" "I did not give them even a glance : turn now and speak to them again."

A Brahman, who had committed a murder, came on a pilgrimage, crying—"For the love of Rāma give an alms even to me, a murderer." On hearing the delightful name, he called him into his own house, and gave him of the offerings to the god, and purified him and sang the praises of his Beloved. The Bráhmans met in conclave and summoned him before them, saying :—"How has his guilt been remitted that you could thus take and eat with him apart?" "Read your books ; their real meaning has not penetrated your heart ; therefore your faith is dull and your blindness has not been removed." "We have read and examined our books ; the virtue of the name is truly as you have said ; but can a murderer be absolved? Please explain that." "Tell me how I may convince you." They said :—"If Siva's bull will eat from his hand, then will we receive him into our company." He gave him of the temple offerings in a dish, and they returned to the place where he had made the vow. There he cried :—"Saturate their souls with the glory of thy name ; thou knowest how the matter stands, what can I say?" On hearing those words he graciously accepted the offering : there was a joyous shout of Victory ! Victory !

Some thieves came by night to thieve and plunder his goods, but beheld a cloud-dark form with bow and arrows in his hand. Whenever he approached with ready shaft, they were afraid ; and though they went round and round, they could not get rid of this watchman. At daybreak they came and asked him :—"Sir, who is this dark-complexioned lad of yours?" On hearing this question, he remained silent and wept ; then gave away all that he had, knowing that Rāma himself had been the watchman. They were initiated and received instruction, and became pure of heart.

A Bráhman had died ; his wife was following him to the pyre. She saw him at a distance and made him obeisance. He addressed her as a happy wife. She replied :—"My husband is dead, and I am about to perish with him." "The word has passed my lips ; I will restore him to life ; worship

1 A Brahman was said to suffer from perpetual thirst and to be glad to secure a drink of water, however impure the purpose for which it has been used.

thou Ráma." Then he called her kinsfolk and said :—" But you must adopt a religious life." They hearkened to his word, and he restored the man to the delights of life. They all became saints when he had taken away their sinful frowardness : none can see heaven in whom passion still lives.

The emperor of Delhi sent an officer to fetch him, explaining, " It is he, you must know, who brought the Bráhmaṇ to life again." " He is anxious to see you," they said,— " so come ; all will be well." They spoke so courteously that he agreed and went. They arrived before the king, who received him with honour, gave him an exalted seat, and said in gracious tones :—" Let me see a miracle ; it is noised throughout the world that you are master of everything." He said :—" It is false ; know that Ráma is all in all." " How is Ráma to be seen ? " he said, and threw him into prison. He prayed within himself : " O gracious Hanumán, have pity upon me." That very moment thousands upon thousands of sturdy monkeys spread all over the place, clawing bodies, and tearing clothes, and great was the alarm. They broke open the fort, wounding the men, destroying everything ; where could one fly for safety ? it seemed as though the end of the world had come. Then his eyes were opened by this taste of a sea of calamities, and he cried,— " Now I wager all my treasure it is he only who can save me." He came and clasped his feet : " If you give me life, I live ; pray speak to them." " Better watch the miracle a little." The king was overwhelmed with confusion. Then he stopt it all and said :—" Quickly abandon this spot, for it is the abode of Ráma." At the word he quitted the place and went and built a new fort, and to this day any one who abides there falls ill and dies.

After returning to Kási he came to Brindá-ban and met Nábhá Ji and heard his poetry, and his whole soul was filled with delight. On visiting the shrine of Maḍan Gopál he said :—" Of a truth Ráma is my special patron ; I would fain see him." Then appeared the god to him in that very form ; and he was glad on beholding his incomparable beauty. It was said to him :—" The Krishna Avatár is of greatest renown ; Ráma was only a partial incarnation." On hearing this he said :—" My soul was full of love for him when I took him only for the son of Dasarath and admired his incomparable beauty ; now that you tell me of his divinity, my love is increased twenty-fold."

Professor Wilson, in his most valuable and interesting " Essay on the Religious Sects of the Hindus," gives the following notice of Tulsi Dás, and adds that he had derived it from the Bhakt-Málá :—" Having been incited to the peculiar adoration of Ráma by the remonstrances of his wife, to whom he was passionately attached, he adopted a vagrant life, visited Benares, and afterwards went to Chitrakut, where he had a personal interview with Hanumán, from whom he received his poetical inspiration and the power of working miracles. His fame reached Delhi, where Sháhjahán was emperor. The monarch sent for him to produce the person of Ráma, which Tulsi Dás refusing to do, the king threw him into confinement. The people of the vicinity, however, speedily petitioned for his liberation, as they were alarmed for their own security : myriads of monkeys having collected about the prison and begun to demolish it and the adjacent buildings. Sháhjahán set the poet at liberty and desired him to solicit some favour as a reparation for the indignity he had suffered. Tulsi Dás accordingly requested him to quit ancient Delhi, which was the abode of Ráma ; and in com-

pliance with this request the emperor left it and founded the new city, thence named Sháhjahánabád. After this Tulsi Dás went to Brindá-ban, where he had an interview with Nábhá Jí; he settled there and strenuously advocated the worship of Síta Ráma, in preference to that of Rádha-Krishan."

On comparing this sketch with the literal translation of the text from which it was derived, it will be seen that it is not very closely in accord with it. It omits many particulars and adds others, and was probably taken not from the genuine Hindi poem itself, but from some prose adaptation,¹ of which, in consequence of the difficulty of the original, there are very many in existence.

It is a curious illustration of the indifference to historical truth and the love for the marvellous, by which the Hindú mind has always been characterised, that although the *tika* even of the Bhakt-Málá was written less than a century after the poet's death, it still gives so little trustworthy information about the real incidents of his life and supplies so much that is clearly fictitious. That it was his wife who first persuaded him to exchange an earthly for a divine love and to devote himself to the service of Ráma may well be accepted as a fact. As to the other legends—of the ghost who introduced him to Hanumán, through whom he obtained a vision of Ráma and Lakshman : of the murderer whom he recognized as cleansed of his crime by the repetition of the holy name ; of the widow on her way to the funeral pile, whose husband he restored to life ; of the emperor's requiring him to perform some miracle and, on his refusal to produce the god to whom he ascribed all his power, throwing him into prison, from which he was delivered by Hanuman's monkey host ; of the emperor's thereupon abandoning a spot which Ráma had made so peculiarly his own ; of the thieves who were prevented from breaking into the poet's house by Ráma

1 I was afterwards able to verify this conjecture, as Mr. Leonard, the Assistant Secretary of the Calcutta Asiatic Society, was kind enough to lend me his copy of Price's "Hindí and Hindustáni Selections," a work to which Professor Wilson refers more than once in the course of his essay. It was published in Calcutta in 1827, and has long been out of print. I find that as many as 50 pages of it are occupied with extracts from the Bhakt-Málá ; but with the exception of some 18 stanzas from the *mul* of Nábhá Jí, all the rest is in simple narrative prose ; and the compiler in his introduction specially mentions that the work itself was rarely to be met with in the Lower Provinces, and that his extracts were taken from a copy in Mr. Wilson's library. [Sanskrit and Hindi being two languages, as distinct as Latin and Italian, the above remarks were never intended (as a reviewer wrongly supposed) to detract in any way from the peculiar merits of one of the greatest Sanskrit scholars that England has ever produced and to whose works no one is more indebted than myself.]

himself acting as watchman ; of his visit to Brindā-ban and his interview with Nābhā Jī ; and finally of his presistence in preferring the worship of Rāma to that of Krishna, though the latter assured him in person that there was no difference between the two—all these legends, as given in the Bhakt Mālā, whatever their foundation, are still popularly accepted as verities and are indissolubly connected with the poet's name. A few further facts of more prosaic character may be gathered from his own works and from tradition : thus we learn from the prologue to the Rāmāyana that he commenced its composition at Ayodhyā in the *Sambat* year 1631, corresponding to 1575 A.D., and that he had studied for some length of time at Soron. He was by descent a Brāhman of the Kanaujiya clan, and in the Bhakt-Sindhu—a modern poem of no great authority, the writer when at a loss for facts being as it seems, in the habit of supplying them out of his own imagination—it is stated that his father's name was Atma Rām and that he was born at Hastinapur. Others make Hājipur, near Chitrakūt, the place of his birth. The greater part of his life was certainly spent at Benares, though he also passed some years in visits to Soron, Ayodhyā, Chitrakūt, Allahabad, and Brindā-ban. He died in the *Sambat* year 1680 (1624 A.D.)

A complete copy of the Rāmāyana in his own hand-writing was once in existence at Rājapur, but it was stolen about the year 1800 by a devotee, who on being pursued threw it into the river. It was eventually recovered by a net, but not till it had been greatly damaged by the water ; Book II, the Ayodhyā, which forms the centre of the volume, being the only part that remained legible. This fragment is still in the temple ; but as every pilgrim is expected to make an offering of a cover for it, it is now enveloped in some 50 wraps and is quite lost to sight. The Maharāja of Benares is said to have employed a copyist to consult it before publishing his edition, which in that case represents the standard text ; and a commentary written by Mahant Rām Charan in *Sambat* 1862, and published by Naval Kishore of Lucknow, professes to have been undertaken after 'handling,' the original MS., which possibly was then complete. The 'handling,' however, may have been only from a motive of veneration and not for critical purposes.

In addition to his great work Tulsi Dās composed at least six other poems, all of them having the one object of popularizing the cultus of his tutelary divinity. They are the Rāmgītāvali (which is one of the text-books in the Government examination for a Degree of Honour), the Dohāvali,

the Kabit-sambandh, the Binay Patriká, the Satsai and the Rám Agyá. All of these have been published, either at Lucknow or Benares, within the last few years, and all now for the first time, excepting the Binay Patriká, which was printed in good type by Sri Lallú Jí for the use of the college of Fort William as far back as the year 1826 ; but copies of this first edition are now very scarce. The list is not unfrequently extended by the addition of the following minor works, as to the genuineness of which there is considerable doubt, viz., the Ráma-Saláká, the Hanumán Báhuks, the Jánaki Mangal, the Párvati Mangal, the Karká Chhand, the Rora Chhand and the Jhulná Chhand. An autograph MS. of the Rám Agyá was preserved in the temple of Síta Rám at Benares, which Tulsi Dás had himself founded, till the Mutiny, but was then lost.¹

- His theological and metaphysical views are pantheistic in character, being based for the most part on the teaching of the later Vedantists as formulated in the Vedánta-Sára and more elaborately expounded in the Bhagavad Gíta, which is the most popular of all Sanskrit didactic poems. The whole visible world, as they maintain, is an unreal phantasm, induced by ignorance or illusion, and it is only by a concession to conventional speech that it can be said to exist at all. The sole representative of true existence is the supreme spirit, Brahm, conceived as absolute and unchangeable unity ; invisible, eternal and all-pervading, but having no relation to the world—since that would involve a nation of dualism—and for the same reason void of cognition, will, activity and all other qualities ; a potentiality, in the ordinary use of language, rather than an actual entity. All phenomena, whether material or spiritual, including even the gods of Vedic mythology, are simply fictions of the mind. But the worship of the inferior divinities and compliance with the external ritual of religion, are considered to purify and prepare the intellect for the reception of higher truths. They are therefore salutary and even necessary practices during the early days of the soul's progress towards perfection. If a man is overtaken by death before he has advanced beyond this preliminary stage, he is born again either into this or into a higher world in some different form the dignity of which is determined by the aggregate merit

1 For the information as to this and the Rajápur MS. I am indebted to Pandit Bhán Pratáp, Tiwári, of Chanár, who also tells me that he has in his possession a manuscript of the poem which professes to be copied from an original dated *Sambat* 1700: that is, only 20 years after the author's death. This he would gladly lend for collation, if a critical edition of the text—which is much required—should ever be undertaken. At present the best edition is Rám Jasn's, Benares, 1883.

or demerit of all his actions in all his previous births.¹ The highest reward for devotion to any special god is the exaltation of the soul to his particular sphere in heaven. But this blessedness is not of permanent duration ; on the expiry of a proportionate period the burden of mundane existence has again to be undergone. It is only on the attainment of perfect knowledge that final emancipation is complete and the individual soul is absorbed for ever into the Impersonal :

" A spiritual star--wrought in a rose
Of light in Paradise, whose only self
Is consciousness of glory wide diffused."

Except to a theosophist, the promise of such an ultimate destiny is not a very attractive one, nor is it conducive to popular morality. For good deeds and evil deeds and the god that recompenses them, all alike belong to the unreal, to the fictitious duality, the world of semblances : while the so-called Supreme Being is no proper object of worship, being a mere cold abstraction, unconscious of his own existence or of ours, and devoid of all attributes and qualities. To correct this practical defect and supply some intelligible motive for withstanding temptation and leading a pure and holy life, the supplementary doctrine of Bhakti or Faith, was developed. Some one of the recognized incarnations of the Hindu Pantheon was no longer regarded as a partial emanation of the divinity, but was exalted into the complete embodiment of it. A loving devotion to his personality was then enjoined as a simple and certain method of attaining to endless felicity ; not the transitory sensual delights of Indra's paradise, nor the mere unconsciousness of utter extinction, but the conscious enjoyment of individual immortality in the immediate presence of the Beatific Vision.

The late introduction of this crowning dogma of Faith in an incarnate Redeemer and its marked similarity to Christian ideas have induced several scholars to surmise that the Brāhmans borrowed it from the early Christian communities in Southern India. The notion is favoured—if not, indeed, originated—by the fact that in the Bhagavad Gīta it is Krishna who figures as the embodiment of the Supreme Being, and both in the name and in the legends of Krishna there is a superficial resemblance to the name of Christ and to some of the incidents recorded of Him in the Gospels. As I have shown more fully elsewhere, there is no historical basis for the supposed connection, while the similarity of

¹ The absence of all recollection of acts done in former states of existence is not an objection to the theory of transmigration ; for the continuity is not one of consciousness, but of that tendency or disposition which is the separate nature of each individual.

name is demonstrably accidental. The doctrine appears to have grown up as a natural sequel to the purely indigenous school of thought in which we find it established, and an exact parallel can be traced in the history of Buddhism, where the nihilism of Nirvāṇa was practically abrogated by the gradual deification of its teacher.¹ In selecting Rāma as his ideal of the divine in preference to Krishna, Tulsi Dās has certainly improved upon the teaching of the Bhagavad.

The tendency of modern scientific thought is setting strongly in favour of the Vedantist theory ; as declaring the existence from all eternity of a personal God to be simply unknowable, and referring all phenomena to a strange mysterious energy, or will, that pervades all nature, that produces all the work done on the face of the earth, and is probably at the roof of life itself ; invisible and insensible, and exhibited only in its effects. Such a theory—as we see from our author's own case—is by no means incompatible with a belief in a divine incarnation : the difficulty is to establish by historical proof that such and such a character—Rāma or Krishna, or whoever it may be—was really born out of the ordinary course of nature, really performed the marvellous acts ascribed to him for the deliverance of the saints, the overthrow of the wicked and the establishment of righteousness, and having accomplished them was again taken up into the heaven from which he came. The whole of Tulsi Dās's Rāmāyana is a passionate protest against the virtual atheism of philosophical Hindú theology. The problem that confronted him is the very same that now most exercises the thought of the nineteenth century. If the Supreme Being is a personal God, he must be limited by the conditions of personality, and can neither be omniscient nor omnipotent. If, on the other hand, the Deity is an omnipresent, all-pervading impersonality, how can any special relation be developed between such an abstraction and the individual soul ? The difficulty is one that has its root in the nature of things ; and no solution of the mystery can be found but in the recognition of faith and reason as two distinct human faculties, with the infinite and the finite as their separate provinces. In the words of Saint Ambrose, *non in dialecticā complacuit Deo saluum facere populum suum*. God would not be adorable if he were not incomprehensible : and a religion that does not transcend man's understanding is not strictly speaking, a religion at all. A just discrimination of

1 In a Chinese inscription, of the year 1021 A.D., that has been discovered at Buddh Gaya, he is thus addressed : "O great master, merciful to the people, sympathizing with all creatures, although thou dost not manifest thyself, still thou art a most efficacious God."

good and evil and a sound code of morality are not beyond the compass of natural intelligence: but the rites and mysteries of religion can only be learnt by a direct revelation from God and through the action of His grace. Their acceptance by faith, even when they seem to conflict with reason, is a part of our earthly probation and a meritorious confession of our dependence on the Supreme. The final purpose of the Incarnation, like the idea of any revelation whatever from God to man, is above comprehension. The fact of the divine message having been sent may be reasonably established by historical evidence, but the tenor of the message transcends argumentative discussion, and demands nothing short of implicit and absolutely unquestioning submission. For the dogmas of revealed religion must *ex-hypothesi*, be incomprehensible mysteries. If they were ascertainable by the ordinary processes of reason it would not be consistent with the economy of the universe to communicate them by the special vehicle of revelation. A professedly revealed religion, which is demonstrable and intelligible throughout, stands self-convicted as a human invention.

The following passage from Book VII of the Bhagavad Gita, as freely rendered by Mr. Edwin Arnold in his 'Song Celestial,' is a very explicit summary of the accepted Vedantic doctrine:—

"There be those, too, whose knowledge, turned aside
By this desire or that, gives them to serve
Some lower gods with various rites constrained
By that which mouldeth them. Unto all such—
Worship what shrine they will, what shapes in faith—
'Tis I who give them faith. I am content.
The heart thus asking favour from its God,
Darkened but ardent, hath the end it craves,
The lesser blessing; but 'tis I who give.
Yet soon is withered what small fruit they reap:
Those men of little minds, who worship so,
Go where they worship, passing with their Gods;
But mine come unto me. Blind are the eyes
Which deem the Unmanifest manifest,
Not comprehending Me in my true self.
Imperishable, viewless, undeclared,
Hidden behind my magic veil of shows,
I am not seen by all; I am not known—
Unborn and changeless—to the idle world.
But I, Arjuna, know all things which were,
And all which are, and all which are to be,
Albeit not one among them knoweth Me."

The words "Blind are the eyes Which deem the Unmanifest manifest" emphatically condemn the worship of

any incarnation, on the ground that it involves an inadequate conception of the Deity. Tulsi Dás, on the other hand, insists that they derogate from the divine perfection, who divest it of personality and reduce it to an abstraction. Against such theologians he hotly protests as when he cries (*VII Chhand* 5)—“Let them preach in their wisdom who contemplate thee as the Supreme Spirit, the Uncreate, inseparable from the universe, recognizable only by inference and beyond the understanding; but we, O Lord! will ever hymn the glories of thy incarnation.” Nor does he want supporters even in this nineteenth century, who give the same answer to the old question ‘Can the attribute of Personality be ascribed to the Absolute?’ Thus Lotze, in his *Outlines of the Philosophy of Religion*, argues as follows: “If all the predicates of unconditionateness are to be valid for the highest being then one condition of this validity lies precisely in the addition of a last formal predicate, *viz.*, that of personal existence. All hindrances of perfect personality we can imagine as not existent in the Infinite Spirit. On this account we conclude with the assertion—which is exactly the opposite of the customary one—that Perfect Personality is reconcilable only with the conception of an Infinite Being; for finite beings, only an approximation to this is attainable.”

The introductory portion of the first Book of the *Rāmāyana* is curious as containing the author’s vindication of his literary style as against his critics, the pedants. They attacked him for lowering the dignity of his subject by clothing it in the vulgar vernacular. However just his defence may be, it has not succeeded in converting the opposite faction: and the professional Sanskrit pandits who are its modern representatives, still affect to despise his work as an unworthy concession to the illiterate masses. With this small and solitary exception the book is in every one’s hands, from the court to the cottage, and is read, or heard, and appreciated alike by every class of the Hindū community, whether high or low, rich or poor, young or old. The purity of its moral sentiments and the absolute avoidance of the slightest approach to any pruriency of idea—which the author justly advances among his distinctive merits—render it a singularly unexceptionable text-book for native boys. For several years I persistently urged its adoption upon the Education Department,¹ and—thanks to Rāja Siva Prasād—extracts from it

¹ A writer in the *Calcutta Review* expressed his astonishment at my proposal. But he falls into the error which has wrecked so many well-intentioned schemes in this country, that of measuring Indian tastes and requirements by a purely English standard. Manuals of history, geography, &c. are very well in their way, but correct information

have been introduced into our primary schools ; while it has always been prescribed as the principal test in the civil examinations for High Proficiency and a Degree of Honour. It is equally well adapted for these apparently incongruous purposes : for a Hindû child generally grasps at once the familiar idiom, and finds no great difficulty in even the most crabbed passage ; while, on the other hand, both the terminology and the syntactic collocation of the words are in the highest degree perplexing to the European student, and severely try his knowledge of the language. As has been said of Spenser in the *Faerie Queene*. Tulsi Dâs never scruples on his own authority to cut down or alter a word, or to adopt a mere corrupt pronunciation, to suit a place in his metre, or because he wants a rhyme. His treatment of words, on occasions of difficulty to his verse, is arbitrary in the extreme. He gives them any sense and shape that the case may demand. Sometimes he merely alters a letter or two ; sometimes he twists off the head or the tail of the unfortunate vocable altogether. Such vagaries, being unconsciously regulated by the genius of the language, are no more puzzling to a Hindû than the colloquialisms of Sam Weller or Mrs. Gamp are to an English reader of Dickens. But they would seem inexplicable mysteries to any Anglo-Indian official, who knew only the language of the Courts and had never studied the vernacular of the people. For such neglect there was formerly much excuse, in the absence both of a dictionary and a grammar ; but the latter want was most admirably supplied in 1876 by Mr. Kellogg, of the Allahabad American Presbyterian Mission, in a work that is to a remarkable degree both lucid and exhaustive ; while Messrs. Hornbl and Grierson's new Comparative Dictionary is not only more scientific in method and elaborate in execution than any similar work that has ever before been attempted by Indian philologists, but it is further supplemented by a special Index to the *Râmâyana*, which exhibits every single word in the poem, and refers to all the passages in which it occurs. As yet only one part of this gigantic work has appeared, and some years must elapse before it is completed. Mr. Bate's dictionary, to which I have already referred, is scarcely intended for very advanced students, but it will be of much use to beginners, since it gives in alphabetical order all the archaic forms of inflection, which at the outset are found so perplexing.

The second Book is more generally read than any other part of the poem, and is the most admired by Hindu critics. The description of King Dasarath's death and the different leave-takings are quoted as models of the pathetic, and in a

public recital there is scarcely one in the audience who will not be moved to tears. The sentiments that the poet depicts, and the figures that he employs to illustrate them, appeal with irresistible force to the Hindû imagination; and, if for no other reason than this, they would be interesting to the English student for the insight they afford into the traditional sympathies and antipathies of the people. The constant repetition of a few stereotyped phrases—such as ‘lotus feet,’ ‘streaming eyes,’ ‘quivering¹ frame’—are irritating to modern European taste, though they find a parallel in the stock epithets of the Homeric poems, and a still more striking one in Klopstock’s *Messiah*, where similar expressions are for ever recurring in wearisome reiteration. Everybody wonders and weeps and smiles and embraces everybody else and dissolves in tears, while every hair on their body stands on end; the last two performances being so specially Talsian, that it ceases to be an exaggeration to describe the eyes of his *dramatis personæ*, in the words of Crashaw, as

Two walking baths, two weeping motions,
Portable and compendious oceans.

Again, the curiously artificial similes derived from the—frequently fabulous—habits of different birds and plants, which (like the oft-repeated refrain of a popular song) never fail to elicit the applause of an appreciative audience, only repel a foreigner as frigid and unmeaning conventionalities. Such are the perpetual allusions to the lotus, that expands in the day and closes at evening; to the lily, that blossoms in the night and fades at sunrise; to the rice crop, that luxuriates in the rain, and to the *jauśa* plant, that is killed by it; to the *chukwá*, that mourns its mate all through the hours of darkness; to the *chukor*, that is never happy except when gazing upon the moon; to the *chítuk*, that patiently endures all the buffeting of the storm, in the confident expectation that the cloud will at last let fall the one auspicious drop for which it thirsts; to the swan, that knows how to separate milk from the water with which it has been mixed; and to the snake, that carries a precious jewel in its head, of which it is always afraid of being robbed. In Shakespear’s time, who was contemporary with Tulsi Dàs, many equally strange pieces of natural history were popularly accepted even in Europe, and

1 The *puluk*, which I generally translate by ‘quivering’ or ‘throbbing,’ means strictly the bristling of the hair upon the body, which is a sign of violent mental agitation. The Manshi, with whom I read in Calcutta some twenty years ago, always, I remember, rendered it by ‘horripilation’; a frightful word, which would destroy all the poetic effect of the most impressive passage, but which he greatly admired on account of its sesquipedalian proportions.

were similarly worked up into poetical commonplaces. As, for instance, the maternal affection of "the kind life-rendering pelican;" the belief that the chameleon lives upon air; that the adder is deaf; that the swan sings before it dies; that crocodiles weep when they have done wrong; that bear's cubs are born formless and are licked into ursine shape by their mother; that some snakes have stings in their tail; and that the toad carries a jewel in its head which is an antidote to poison.

In spite of all drawbacks, the Hindi Rāmāyana has many passages that are instinct with a genuine poetic feeling, which appeals to universal humanity, and which it is hoped will be dimly recognized even through the intellectual medium of a prose translation. The characters also of the principal actors in the drama are clearly and consistently drawn; and all may admire, though they refuse to worship, the piety and unselfishness of Bharat: the enthusiasm and high courage of Lakshman; the affectionate devotion of Sita, that paragon of all wife-like virtues; and the purity, meekness, generosity and self-sacrifice of Rāma, the model son, husband and brother, 'the guileless king, high, self-contained and passionless'—the Arthur of Indian chivalry.

In the later Books the narrative is generally more rapid than in the earlier part of the poem, and several incidents are so casually mentioned that, without the explanatory references to the Sanskrit Rāmāyana, which I have given in the notes, a literal rendering would convey no meaning to the ordinary reader.¹ It is to some extent a literary defect that the rôle of poet is so often dropt for that of theologian; and the frequent hymns to Rāma, who is apostrophized under every conceivable name that can help to realize to the mind the mystery of incarnate divinity, soon become wearisome. But the object that Tulsī Dās had in view is his sufficient excuse. By the course that he has adopted, fitting his special doctrines of faith, individual immortality and the like into the familiar framework of ancient legend, instead of inculcating them by a more strictly didactic method, he has succeeded in popularizing his views to a far greater extent than any of the rival Hindu Reformers, who flourished about the same period. It was their object also to simplify the complications and correct the abuses of existing practice, but the only result of their preaching was to establish yet another element of dissension and augment the disorder

1 Of the two current recensions of the older poem, the one generally followed by Tulsī Dās is the Bengal, which is the text given by Gorresio in his handsome edition.

which they hoped to remove. Tulsi Dás alone, though the most famous of them all, has no disciples that are called after his name. There are Vallabhacháris and Rádhá Vallabhis and Malúk Dásis and Prán Náthís, and so on, in interminable succession, but there are no Tulsi Dásis. Virtually, however, the whole of Vaishnava Hindúism has fallen under his sway ; for the principles that he expounded have permeated every sect and explicitly or implicitly now form the nucleus of the popular faith as it prevails throughout the whole of the Bengal Presidency from Hardwár to Calcutta.

In the year 1876, when I published the first instalment of my translation, I was still at Mathurá, in a congenial atmosphere of Hindú associations. After my transfer to Buda-Pest in 1877 I laboured under the serious disadvantage of writing in a thoroughly Muhammadanized district, where it was almost as difficult to obtain any assistance on subjects connected with Hindú literature or scholarship as it would have been in England. But by that time the familiarity I had acquired with my author was sufficiently long and intimate to enable me to complete my task unaided.

At the outset I was under the impression that as a translator, there was no one at all in the field before me; but after making some little progress in the second book, I discovered that there was already in existence for that particular section of the poem an English version, published in 1871, by Adálat Khán, a Muhammadan Munshi of the College of Fort William in Calcutta. I at once procured a copy of it and it is only proper to acknowledge that it was of considerable assistance to me. It does not, however, encroach very largely upon the ground that I had intended to occupy. The Munshi appears to have written solely with a view to lighten the labours of his own pupils and of others who, like them, were preparing for a special examination. Despite not a few misapprehensions of the sense, such persons will probably find it quite as useful for their purpose as my translation, if not more so. But in the attempt to secure literal accuracy, and also, no doubt, from the fact that English was not the mother-tongue of the translator, the language employed is throughout so curiously unidiomatic that in many places it is absolutely unintelligible without a reference to the original, and this the general reader would not be in a position to make. As a specimen I give the *chaupái* following *dohí* 224 (with which may be compared my rendering, page 268).

“ If he leaves me, knowing my mind wicked, and receives me, considering his servant, my sheltering-place then will be in the shoes

of Rāma : he is my good master; but the fault is in this servant. The *chātak* and the fish deserve the praise of the world; they are sincere in their usual vow and love. Thus having reflected in his mind, he went along the road, ashamed and overpowered with love. The sin committed by his mother was as if keeping him back; but the Bull of patience was walking by the power of his faith, and when he knew the nature of Rāma, his feet fell on the ground, hunched. The state of Bharat at that time was such as that of the leaf in a current of water. Seeing the grief and love of Bharat, the pilot became stupefied at that moment."

The uncountness of the Munshi's style will give some idea of what is certainly the main difficulty that has to be encountered in a prose translation from Hindi verse. No one who has not had practical experience in the matter can fully appreciate the amount of thought that has to be expended on almost every sentence before the peculiarities of Oriental expression can be adapted to the requirements of English idiom. Without the most delicate handling it is impossible to avoid either a sacrifice of accuracy in the letter, or a misrepresentation of the spirit by a baldness of rendering, which suggests only images of the ludicrous and grotesque, while the sentiments of the original in their native dress are felt to be both natural and pathetic.

F. S. GROWSE.

Post script. Under the patronage of Mr. Grierson, an enterprising Publisher of Patna (Babu Rām Din Sirih of the Kharg Bilās Press, Bānkipore), has now published a text of the Rām-charit-mānas, which is an exact reproduction of the original MSS. This must be a work of the highest interest to all Hindi Scholars; but it may be surmised that the variations from the received text are of more importance from the philological than from the literary point of view.

THE RĀMĀYANA

OF

TULSI DĀS.

BOOK I.

CHILDHOOD.

Sanskrit Invocation.

I REVERENCE Sārādā and Ganes, the inventors of the alphabet and of phraseology, of the poetic modes and of metre. I reverence Bhavāni and Sankara, the incarnations of faith and hope, without whom not even the just can see God, the Great Spirit. I reverence, as the incarnation of Sankara, the all-wise Guru, through whom even the crescent moon is everywhere honoured.¹ I reverence the king of bards² and the monkey king, of pure intelligence, who ever lingered with delight in the holy forest land of Rāma and Sīta's infinite perfection. I bow before Sīta, the beloved of Rāma; the queen of birth, of life and death; the destroyer of sorrow; the cause of happiness.

I reverence, under his name RAMA, the lord Hari; supreme over all causes; to whose illusive power are subject the whole universe and every supernatural being from Brāhma downwards; by whose light truth is made manifest, as when what appeared to be a snake turns out a rope; and by whose feet as by a bark those who will may pass safely over the ocean of existence.

In accord with all the Purānas and different sacred texts, and with what has been recorded in the Rāmāyana (of Vālmīki) and elsewhere, I, Tulsi, to gratify my own heart's

1 The crescent moon, being one of Sankara's (i.e. Siva's) constant symbols, is honoured on his account, though in itself imperfect: while the full moon is honoured for its own sake.

2 The king of bards, Vālmīki, the reputed author of the Sanskrit Rāmāyana. The monkey king is of course Hanumān, and the two are brought together more on account of the classical origin of name than for any other reason, *Kuśāvarta* and *Kapīvarta* differing only by a single letter.

desire, have composed these lays of Raghunáth in most choice and elegant modern speech.

Sorathú 1.

O Ganes, of the grand elephant head; the mention of whose name ensures success, be gracious to me, accumulation of wisdom, storehouse of all good qualities! Thou, too, by whose favour the dumb becomes eloquent, and the lame can climb the vastest mountain, be favourable to me, O thou that consumest as a fire all the impurities of this iron age. Take up thy abode also in my heart, O thou that slumberest on the milky ocean, with body dark as the lotus, and eyes bright as a budding water-lily. O spouse of Umá clear of hue as the jasmine or the moon; home of compassion, who showest pity to the humble; show pity upon me, O destroyer of Kámadeva. I reverence the lotus feet of my master, that ocean of benevolence, Hari incarnate, whose words are like a flood of sunlight on the darkness of ignorance and infatuation.¹

Chaupái 1.

I reverence the pollen-like dust of the lotus feet of my master, bright, fragrant, sweet and delicious; pure extract of the root of ambrosia, potent to disperse all the attendant ills of life; like the holy ashes on the divine body of Sambhu, beautiful, auspicious, ecstatic. Applied to the forehead as a *tilak*, it cleanses from defilement the fair mirror of the human mind and gives it the mastery of all good. By recalling the lustre of the nails of the reverend guru's feet, a divine splendour illumines the soul, dispersing the shades of error with its sun-like glory. How blessed he who takes it to his heart! The mental vision brightens and expands, the night of the world with sin and pain fades away, the actions of Ráma,² like diamonds and rubies, whether obvious or obs-

1 The persons addressed in this stanza are Ganes, Sarasvati, Náráyan, Siva, and the poet's own spiritual instructor, or guru.

2 The simple actions are compared to rubies, which may be picked up on the surface of the ground; the mysterious actions to diamonds, which have to be dug out of a mine.

cure, all alike become clear, in whichever direction the mine is explored.

Dohai 1.

By applying this collyrium as it were to the eyes, the student acquires both holiness and wisdom, and is able to understand his sportive career when on earth—on mountain, or in forest—and all the treasures of his grace.

Chauviti 2.

The dust of the guru's feet is a soft and charming collyrium, like ambrosia for the eyes, to remove every defect of vision. With this having purified the eyes of my understanding, I proceed to relate the actions of Ráma, the redeemer of the world. First I reverence the feet of the great Bráhma saints, potent to remove the doubts engendered by error. In my heart, as with my voice, I reverence the whole body of the faithful, mines of perfection; whose good deeds resemble the produce of the cotton plant in its austerity, purity and manifold usefulness, and in its hiding the defects even of those by whom it has been most roughly treated: reverence to the saints, whatever the age or clime in which their glory was consummated. Their congregation is all joy and felicity, like the great *tírtha* Prayág endowed with motion: for faith in Ráma is as the stream of the Ganges; contemplation on Bráhma as the Sarasvati; and ritual, dealing with precepts and prohibitions for the purification of this iron age, as the sun-god's daughter, the Jamuná. The united flood of the Tribeni is represented by the legends of Hari and of Hara, filling all that hear with delight: the sacred fig-tree, by faith firm in its own traditions; and Prayág itself, by the assembly of the virtuous. Easy of access to all, on any day, at any place, curing all the ills of pious devotees, is this unspeakable, spiritual chief *tírtha*, of manifest virtue and yielding immediate fruit.

Dohai 2.

At this Prayág of holy men, whoever hears and under-

stands, and in spirit devoutly bathes, receives even in this life all four rewards.¹

Chaupái 3.

In an instant behold the result of the immersion; the crow becomes a parrot and the goose a swan. Let no one marvel at hearing this, for the influence of good company is no mystery. Válmiki, Nárad and the jar-born Agastya² have told its effect upon themselves. Whatever moves in the water, or on the earth, or in the air; every creature in the world, whether animate or inanimate, that has attained to knowledge, or glory, or salvation, or power, or virtue, by any work, at any time or place, has triumphed through association with the good; neither the world nor the Veda knows of any other expedient. Intercourse with the good is attainable only by the blessing of Ráma and without it wisdom is impossible: it is the root of all joy and felicity; its flowers are are good works and its fruit perfection. By it the wicked are reformed: as when by the touch of the philosopher's stone a vile metal becomes gold. If by mischance a good man falls into evil company, like the gem in a serpent's head, he still retains his virtue. Bráhma, Visnu, Mahádeva, the wisest of the poets, all have failed to expound the pre-eminence of a saint: for me to tell it is, as it were, for a costermonger to expatiate on the merits of a set of jewels.

Dohá 3—4.

I reverence the saints of equable temperament, who regard neither friend nor foe, like a gracious flower which sheds its

1 The four rewards are *káma*, *artha*, *dharma*, *moksha*; that is, pleasure, wealth, religious merit and final salvation.

2 Válmiki confessed to Ráma that he had once been a hunter and taken the life of many innocent creatures, till he fell in with the seven Rishis, who converted him and taught him to express his penitence by constantly repeating the work *mára*, *mára*. As this contains exactly the same letters as the name Ráma, it acted as a spell and advanced him to the highest degree of sanctity.

Similarly Nárad confessed to Vyása, the author of the Puránas, that he was by birth only the son of a poor slave-girl, and had become a saint simply by eating the fragments of food left by the holy men who frequented his master's house.

Agastya also declared to Mahádeva that by birth he was the meanest of all creatures, and had only attained to miraculous powers by the influence of good company.

fragrance alike on both infolding hands.¹ Ye saints, whose upright intention, whose catholic charity, and whose ready sympathy I acknowledge, hear my child-like prayer be gracious to me and inspire me with devotion to the feet of Ráma.

Chaupái 4.

Again, I would propitiate those wretches² who without cause delight to vex the righteous; with whom a neighbour's loss is gain; who rejoice in desolation and weep over prosperity; who are as an eclipse to the full-moon glory of Hari and Hara; who become as a gaint with a thousand arms to work another's woe; who have a thousand eyes to detect a neighbour's faults, but, like flies on *ghí*, settle on his good points only to spoil them; quick as fire, implacable as the god of hell³; rich in crime and sin as Kuver is in gold; like an eclipse for the clouding of friendship, and as dead asleep as Kumbha-karn⁴ to everything good; if they can do any injury, as ready to sacrifice themselves as hailstones, that melt after destroying a crop; spiteful as the great serpent with a thousand tongues; and like Prithuráj⁵, with a thousand ears, to tell and hear of others' faults: like the thousand-eyed Indra, too, ever delighting in much strong drink and in a voice of thunder.

Dohá 5.

I know when they hear of philosophers, who regard friend or foe both as friends, they are enraged; but I clasp my hands and entreat them pitiously.

1 Though the right hand is the one by which it has been plucked, and the left that in which it is held and preserved.

2 In the following lines the poet defends himself by anticipation against possible objections, and roundly abuses the whole army of critics.

3 Yama, the Hindu Pluto, is here called Mahishesa, from *mahisha* a buffalo, that being the animal on which he is represented as riding.

4 Rávan's gigantic brother, Kumbha-karn, obtained as a boon from Bráhma, that whenever he had satisfied his voracious appetite the slumber of repletion might be of the longest and deepest, and that he might only wake to eat again.

5 It is not related that Prithuráj had really ten thousand ears, but only that he prayed that he might be as quick to hear whatever redounded to the glory of God as if his ears were so many.

Chaupái 5.

I have performed the rôle of supplication, nor will they forget their part. However carefully you may bring up a crow, it will still be a crow and a thief. I propitiate at once the feet of saints and sinners, who each give pain, but with a difference: for the first kill by absence, while the second torture by their presence: as opposite as a lotus and a leech, though both alike are produced in water. Good and bad thus resemble nectar and intoxicating drink, which were both begotten by the one great ocean:¹ each by its own acts attains to pre-eminence; the one in honour, the other in dishonour; compare with the good, ambrosia, or the moon, or the Ganges; and with the bad, poison, or fire, or the river Karmnásá. Virtue and vice are known to all; but whatever is to a man's taste that seemeth him good.

Dohá 6.

The good aim at goodness, and the vile at vileness; ambrosia is esteemed for giving immortality, and poison for causing death.

Chaupái 6.

Why enumerate the faults and defects of the bad and the virtues of the good? both are a boundless and unfathomable ocean. Hence occasionally virtue is reckoned as vice, improperly and from want of discrimination. For God hath created both, but it is the Veda that has distinguished one from the other.² The heroic legends and the Puráṇas also, no less than the Vedas, recognize every kind of good and evil as creatures

1 The churning of the ocean is one of the commonplaces of Hindú poetry, and the allusions to it in the Rámáyana are innumerable. With Mount Mandara as a churning-stick, the great serpent Vāsuki as a rope, and Náráyaṇ himself in tortoise form as the pivot on which to work, the gods and demigods combined to churn the milky ocean. Thus were produced from it: the moon; the sacred cow, Surabhi or Kamá-dhenu; the goddess of wine, Varuni; the tree of paradise, Parijata, or Kalpa-taru; the heavenly nymphs, the Apsaras; the goddess of beauty, Lakshmi or Sri; and the physician of the gods, Aśviní. The cup of nectar which the latter held in his hand was seized and quaffed by the gods; while the poison, which also was produced was either claimed by the snake gods or swallowed by Mahádeva; whence comes the blackness of his throat, that gives him the name of *Níl-kanth*.

2 "I did not know sin, but by the law,"—*St. Paul*.

of the Creator : pain and pleasure ; sin and religious merit ; night and day ; saint and sinner ; high caste and low caste ; demons and gods ; great and small ; ambrosia and life ; poison and death ; the visible world and the invisible God ; life and the lord of life ; rich and poor ; the beggar and the king ; Kási and Magadhá ;¹ the Ganges and the Karamnásá ; the desert of Márwár and the rich plain of Málwá ; the Bráhlman and the butcher ; heaven and hell ; sensual passion and asceticism ; the Vedas and the Tantras, and every variety of good and evil.

Dohá 7.

The Creator has made the universe to consist of things animate and inanimate ; good and evil ; a saint like a swan extracts the milk of goodness and rejects the worthless water.²

Chaupái 7.

When the Creator gives men this faculty of judgment they abandon error and become enamoured of the truth ; but conquered by time, temperament, or fate, even the good, as a result of their humanity, may err from virtue ; but Hari takes their body—so to speak—and corrects it, and, removing all sorrow and sin, cleanses it and glorifies them. If the bad through intercourse with the good do good, their inherent badness is not effaced. An impostor of fair outward show may be honoured on account of his garb, but in the end he is exposed and does not succeed, like Kála-nemi, or Rávan, or Ráhu.³ The good are honoured, notwithstanding their mean appearance, like the bear Jámavant or the monkey Hanumán. Bad company is loss, and good company is gain ; this is a truth recognized both by the world and the Veda. In company with the wind the dust flies heavenwards ; if it joins water, it becomes mud and sinks. According to the charac-

1 Magadhá (Bihár) is taken as the opposite to Kási, in consequence of its being the birthplace of Buddhism.

2 To the swan (*śvā-hans*) is ascribed the fabulous faculty of being able to separate milk from water, after the two have been mixed together.

3 Kála-nemi by assuming the form of an ascetic imposed for a time upon Hanumán, as Rávan did upon Síta : and even Vishnu, at the churning of the ocean, was at first deceived by Ráhu, who appeared like one of the gods.

ter of the house in which a parrot or *maina* is trained, it learns either to repeat the name of Râma or to give abuse. With the ignorant, soot is mere refuse ; but it may make good ink, and be used even for copying a Purâna ; while water, fire, and air combined become an earth-refreshing rain-cloud.

Dohâ 8—11.

The planets, medicines, water, air, clothes, all are good or bad things according as their accompaniments are good or bad ; and people observe this distinction. Both lunar fortnights are equal as regards darkness and light ; but a difference in name has been wisely made, and as the moon waxes or wanes the fortnight is held in high or low esteem. Knowing that the whole universe, whether animate or inanimate, is pervaded by the spirit of Râma, I reverence with clasped hands the lotus feet of all gods, giants, men, serpents, birds, ghosts, departed ancestors, Grandharvas, Kinnaras, demons of the night—I pray ye all be gracious to me.

Chaupâi 8.

By four modes of birth¹ are produced 84 laks of species inhabiting the air, the water and the earth. With clasped hand I perform an act of adoration, recognizing the whole world as pervaded by the spirit of Sîta and Râma. In your compassion regard me as your servant, and dissembling no longer, be kind and affectionate. I have no confidence in the strength of my own wisdom, and therefore I supplicate you all. I would narrate the great deeds of Raghupati, but my ability is little and his acts unfathomable. I am conscious that I have no skill or capacity ; my intellect in short is beggarly, while my ambition is imperial ; I am thirsting for nectar, when not even skim-milk is to be had. Good people

¹ The four *âkaras*, or modes of birth, are named *pîndaja*, or viviparous ; *andaja*, or oviparous ; *svedaja*, born in sweat, like the *amṛtâkṣa*, produced by sprouting like a tree. The 84 lakhs of species are divided as follows : 9 lakhs of aquatic creatures, 27 lakhs of those attached to the earth, 11 lakhs of insects, 10 lakhs of birds, 23 lakhs of quadrupeds, and 4 lakhs of men. The literal meaning of *âkara* being a mine, *bhâni*, which has the same primary signification is used for it in *Chaupâi* 41.

all pardon my presumption and listen to my childish babbling, as a father and mother delight to hear the lisping prattle of their little one. Perverse and malignant fools may laugh, who pick out faults in others wherewith to adorn themselves. Every one is pleased with his own rhymes, whether they be pungent or insipid ; but those who praise another's voice are good men, of whom there are few in the world ; there are many enough like the rivers, which on getting a rainfall swell out a flood of their own, but barely one like the generous ocean, which swells on beholding the fulness of the moon.

Dohú 12.

My lot is low, my purpose high ; but I am confident of one thing, that the good will be gratified to hear me, though fools may laugh.

Chauptá 9.

The laughter of fools will be grateful to me : the crow calls the *koil's* voice harsh, The goose ridicules the swan, and the frog the *chótak* ; so the low and vile abuse pure verse. As they have no taste for poetry nor love for Ráma, I am glad that they should laugh. If my homely speech and poor wit are fit subjects for laughter, let them laugh ; it is no fault of mine. If they have no understanding of true devotion to Lord, the tale will seem insipid enough : but to the true and orthodox worshippers of Hari and Hara the story of Raghubar will be sweet as honey. The singer's devotion to Ráma will by itself be sufficient embellishment to make the good hear and praise the melody. Though no poet, nor clever, nor accomplished ; though unskilled in every art and science ; though all the elegant devices of letters and rhetoric, the countless variations of metre, the infinite divisions of sentiment and style, and all the defects and excellences of verse, and the gift to distinguish between them are unknown to me. I declare and record it on a fair white sheet—

Dohú 13.

That though my style has not a single charm of its own,

it has a charm known throughout the world, which men of discernment will ponder as they read—

Chaupái 10.

The gracious name of Raghupati ; all-purifying essence of the Puránas and the Veda, abode of all that is auspicious, destroyer of all that is inauspicious, ever murmured in prayer by Umá and the great Tripurári. The most elegant composition of the most talented poet has no real beauty if the name of Ráma is not in it: in the same way as a lovely woman adorned with the richest jewels is vile if unclothed. But the most worthless production of the feeblest versifier, if adorned with the name of Ráma, is heard and repeated with reverence by the wise, who extract what is good in it, like bees gathering honey ; though the poetry has not a single merit, the glory of Ráma is manifested thereby. This is the confidence which has possessed my soul ; is there anything which good company fails to exalt ? Thus smoke forgets its natural pungency and in incense yields a sweet scent. My language is that in vulgar use, but my subject is the highest, the story of Ráma, enrapturing the world.

Chhand 1.1

Though rapturous lays befit his praise, who cleansed a world accurst,
Yet Tulsi's rivulet of rhyme may slake a traveller's thirst.

How pure and blest on Siva's breast show the vile stains of earth !
So my poor song flows bright and strong illumed by Ráma's worth.

Dohá 14.—15.

From its connection with the glory of Ráma, my verse will be most grateful to every one. Any wood that comes from the Malaya sandal-groves is valued ; who considers what kind of wood it is ? Though a cow be black, its milk is pure and wholesome, and all men drink it ; and so, though my speech

1 The *chhands* are generally somewhat enthusiastic outbursts, in which the oft-repeated rhyme is a little apt to run away with the sense. The better to indicate their special character, one-half of the 62 that occur in this book will be rendered metrically. The first line always repeats some emphatic word from the last line of the preceding stanza.

is rough, it tells the glory of Síta and Ráma, and will therefore be heard and repeated with pleasure by sensible people.

Chaupái 11.

So long as the diamond remains in the serpent's head, the ruby on the mountain top, or the pearl in its elephant's brow, they are all without beauty ; but in a king's diadem or on a lovely woman they become beautiful exceedingly. Similarly, as wise men tell, poetry is born of one faculty, but beautified by another ; for it is in answer to pious prayer that the Muse leaves her heavenly abode and speeds to earth ; without immersion in the fountain of Ráma's deeds all labour and trouble count for nothing. An intelligent poet understands this, and sings only of Hari, the redeemer, and his virtues. To recount the doings of common people is mere idle beating of the head, which the Muse loathes. Genius is, as it were, a shell in the sea of the soul, waiting for the October rain of inspiration ; if a gracious shower falls, each drop becomes a lovely pearl of poetry.

Dohá 16.

Then dexterously pierced and strung together on the thread of Ráma's adventures, they form a beautiful chain to be worn on a good man's breast.

Chaupái 12.

Men born in this grim iron age are outwardly swans, but inwardly as black as crows ; walking in evil paths, abandoning the Veda,¹ embodiments of falsehood, vessels of impurity, hypocrites, professing devotion to Ráma, but slaves of gold, of passion, and of lust. Among them I give the first place to myself, a hypocrite, alas ! of the very first rank ; but were I to tell all my vices, the list would so grow that it would

¹ By the Veda, to which Tulsi Dás so frequently appeals, must be understood not the original Veda itself, with which he had absolutely nothing in common, but only the Upanishads, which are also popularly quoted as of Vedic authority. They are brief speculative treatises, over 200 in all, in a discursive and speculative style, and of an ultra-Pantheistic tendency. Though attached to the Vedas, they are for the most part of much later date.

have no end. I have therefore said but very little, but a word is enough for the wise. Let none of my hearers blame me for offering so many apologies; whoever is troubled in mind by them is more stupid and dull of wit than I am myself. Though I am no poet, and have no pretensions to cleverness, I sing as best I can the virtues of Rāma. How unfathomable his actions, how shallow my poor world-entangled intellect! Before the strong wind that could uproot Mount Meru, of what account is such a mere fleck of cotton as I am? When I think of Rāma's infinite majesty I tremble as I write.

Dohā 17.

For Sarasvati, Sesh-nág, Siva and Bráhma, the Shástras, the Veda, the Puránas, all are unceasingly singing his perfection, yet fail to declare it.

Chaupái 13.

All know the greatness of the lord to be thus unutterable, yet none can refrain from attempting to expound it. For this reason the Veda also has declared many different modes of effectual worship. There is one God, passionless, formless, uncreated, the universal soul, the supreme spirit, the all-pervading, whose shadow is the world; who has become incarnate and does many things, only for the love that he bears to his faithful people; all-gracious and compassionate to the humble; who in his mercy ever refrains from anger against those whom he loves and knows to be his own: restorer of the past; protector of the poor;¹ all-good, all-powerful, the lord Raghuráj. In this belief the wise sing the glory of Hari, and their song thus becomes holy and meritorious. I, too, bowing my head to Rāma's feet, am emboldened to sing his fame, following a path which has been made easy by the divine bards who have trodden it before me.

Dohā 18.

As when once a king has prepared a bridge over a broad

¹ *Gharīb nawáz*. This is the first Persian word that has occurred in the poem.

stream, an ant, insignificant as it is, is able to cross without difficulty.

Chandī 14.

In this manner re-assuring myself, I undertake to recount Rāma's charming adventures, as they have been reverently told by Vyāsa and the other great poets, whose lotus feet I adore, praying, Fulfil ye my desire. I reverence also the poets of these latter days, who have sung of Raghuṇāthi, bards of high intelligence, who have written in Prākṛit and the vulgar tongue. All who have been in time past, or who now are, or who hereafter shall be, I bow to all in the utmost good faith and sincerity. Be propitious and grant this boon, that in assemblies of good men my song may be honoured! If the good and wise will not honour it, the silly poet has had all his labour in vain. The only fame, or poetry, or power, that is of any worth, is that which like Ganges water is good for all. The incongruity between Rāma's glory and my rude speech makes me hesitate; but by your favour all will turn out well; for even coarse cloth, if embroidered with silk, becomes beautiful. Be kind enough to think of this, and my style will then match the excellence of my theme.

Dohā 19.

A clear style and an exalted theme are both commendable; and when they are combined, an enemy even, forgetting his natural hostility, will repeat the strain. But such a combination is not to be acquired without genius, and genius I have none; so again and again I beg of you to bear with me while I sing the glory of Hari. The great poets are like the swans sporting in the Mānasa lake of Hari's deeds; look on me as a well-meaning child and make allowances.

Sorathā 2.

I reverence the lotus feet of the great sage who composed the Rāmāyana, smooth strains on rough topics, and

faultless, though a story of the faulty.¹ I reverence the Vedas which are like a boat in which to cross the ocean of existence, without ever dreaming of weariness, while recounting Ráma's excellent glory. I reverence the dust on the feet of Bráhma, creator of this ocean-like world, from which have been produced men, good and bad ; as of old from the same source came at once ambrosia, the moon, and the cow Kámadhenu, and also poison and intoxicating liquor.

Dohá 20.

Reverencing with clasped hands gods, Bráhmans, philosophers, and sages, I pray—'Be gracious to me and accomplish all my fair desire.'

Chaupái 15.

Again I reverence the Sarasvati and the Ganges, both holy and beautiful streams cleansing sin by a single draught or immersion, whose name as soon as uttered or heard at once removes error. I adore as I would my guru, or my natural parents, Siva and Párvati, protectors of the humble, daily benefactors, servants and courtiers in attendance on Síta's lord and in every way Tulsi's true friends ; who, in their benevolence and considering the degeneracy of the times, have themselves composed many spells in a barbarous language, incoherent syllables and unintelligible mutterings, mysterious revelations of the great Siva.² By his patronage I may make my story an agreeable one, and by meditating on Siva and Párvati

¹ In Hindi poetry it is considered a beauty if a phrase is so worded as to be capable of two or more different interpretations. It is sufficient to note this peculiarity once for all ; but there are an immense number of passages in which, though the meaning which I have adopted seems to me, on the whole, the one most appropriate to the context, it by no means follows that other interpretations are not, from the grammarian's point of view, equally correct. Thus, the line rendered as above would literally stand thus - Rough, soft, beautiful, faultless, full of faults. And this conveys the general meaning which I have expressed. But there are two plays upon words ; for *sakhara*, ordinarily 'rough,' and therefore contrasted with *sakomal*, 'soft,' is also intended to bear the meaning 'relating to the demon Khara'; and similarly *dúshan sahít*, 'full of faults,' can be forced into meaning 'with the demon Dúshan.'

² The allusion is to the magic spells and mystical formularies of the Tantras, which are for the most part mere strings of uncouth and utterly unmeaning words, such as OM, AIN, HRIN SRIN, and again AN, HUN, PHAT two mantras recited during the ceremonies of the Durga Puja. They all purport to have been revealed by Siva himself to Párvati.

may relate Rāma's adventures in a way that will give pleasure. It is only by his favour that my verse can be beautified, as a dark night by the moon and stars. Whoever in a devout spirit, with intelligence and attention, hears or repeats this lay of mine, he shall become full of true love for Rāma, and, cleansed from worldly stains, shall enjoy heavenly felicity.

Dohai 21.

Whether I am awake or dreaming, if Siva and Gauri grant me their favour, all that I say shall come true as to the effect of my song, though it be in the vulgar tongue.

Chaupai 16.

I reverence the holy city of Ayodhyā and the river Sarjú, cleansing from all earthly impurity. I salute also the inhabitants of the city, for whom the Lord had no little affection; seeing that he ignored all the sin of Sita's calumniator and set men's minds at rest.¹ I reverence Kausalya, eastern heaven, from which glory was diffused over the whole world; whence Raghupati arose as a lovely moon, giving joy to the world, but blighting like a frost the lotus leaves of vice. To King Dasarath and all his queens, incarnations of virtue and felicity, I make obsequiance in word, deed and heart, saying 'Be gracious to me as to a servant of your son, O parents of Rāma, that acme of greatness, ye in whose creation the creator surpassed himself.'

Sorathi 3.

I reverence the King of Avadh, who had such true love for Rāma's feet that, when parted from his lord, his life snapped and parted too like a straw.

¹ The calumniator was a washerman, whose wife had gone away without asking his permission, to her father's house and had stayed there three days. On her return her husband refused to take her in, saying—'Do you think I am a Rāma, who takes back his Sita after she has been living for eleven months in another man's house?' When this came to Rāma's ears, he showed his respect for the delicacy of his subjects by dismissing Sita, and, instead of punishing the washerman, promoted him to honour. This incident would naturally find a place in the 7th canto of the poem; and from the allusion to it here, it may be presumed that Tulsi Dās originally intended to relate it. But by the time he had written so far, the enthusiasm of his devotion had waxed to great to allow of his committing such an insinuation of evil had ever been made against the Lord.

Chaupái 17.

I salute the King of Videha, with all his court, who had the greatest affection for Ráma; though he concealed his devotion under royal state, yet it broke out as soon as he saw him. Then, next, I throw myself at the feet of Bharat, whose constancy and devotion surpass description; whose soul like a bee thirsting for sweets was ever hovering round the lotus feet of Ráma. I reverence too the lotus feet of Lakshman, cool, comely and source of delight to their worshippers, whose glory is as it were the standard for the display of Ráma's pure emblazonment. Thou who to remove the terrors of the world didst become incarnate in the form of the thousand-headed serpent for the sake of the universe, be ever propitious to me, O son of Sumitrá, ocean of compassion storehouse of perfection. I bow also to Ripu-súdan (*i.e.*, Satrugbha), the generous hero, Bharat's constant companion; and to the conqueror Hanumán, whose glory has been told by Ráma himself,

Sorathá 4.

The Son of the Wind, of profound intelligence, like a consuming fire in the forest of vice, in whose heart Ráma equipped with bow and arrows, has established his home.

Chaupái 18.

The monkey lord, the king of bears and demons, Angad and all the monkey host, I throw myself at the benign feet of them all, for though contemptible in appearance they yet found Ráma. I worship all his faithful servants—whether birds, beasts, gods, men or demons—all his unselfish adherents. I worship Sukadeva, Sanat-kumára, Nárada, and the other sages of excellent renown, putting my head to the ground and crying: 'My lords, be gracious to your servant.' I propitiate the lotus feet of Jának's daughter, Jánki, mother of the world, best beloved of the Fountain of Mercy; by whose grace I may attain to unclouded intelligence. Again in heart, in word and deed I worship the all-worthy feet of

Raghunáth ; the glance of whose lotus eyes, like an arrow from the bow, rejoices his votaries by destroying all their misfortunes.

Dohá 22.

As a word and its meaning are inseparable, and as a wave cannot be distinguished from the water of which it is composed, the difference being only in the name ; so with Ráma and Síta, the refuge of the distressed, whom I adore.

Chutupá 19.

I adore the name of Ráma as borne by Raghubar,¹ the source of all light, whether of the fire, or the sun, or the moon ; substance of the triune god ; vital breath of the Veda ; the passionless ; the incomparable ; the source of all good ; the great spell muttered by Mahádeva and enjoined by him as necessary to salvation even at Kási. By confessing its power, Ganes obtained the first place among the gods ;² by its power, though he muttered it backwards, the great poet Válmiki attained to purity ; by its repetition, after she had heard from Siva that it was equal to a thousand names, Bhaváni was able to join her husband ;³ while he, Mahádeva, in his delight on beholding her simple faith, assumed the woman, making that ornament of her sex the ornament of his own body. Again, it was by the power of this name that the poison swallowed by Mahádeva was converted into ambrosia.

1 For there are two other Rámas besides Ráma-chandra, viz., Parasuráma and Balaráma.

2 According to the legend, the gods were disputing among themselves as to which of them should be accounted the greatest. To settle the matter Bráhma proposed that they all should race round the world. They started accordingly, each on the animal which he most delighted to ride ; and Ganes being mounted, as was his custom, on nothing better than a rat, was of course soon left far behind. In his distress the sage Nárad appeared to him and suggested that he should write the word Ráma in the dust and pace round that, for in it was virtually included all creation. This he did, and returned to Bráhma, who at once awarded him the prize.

3 One day when Siva had finished eating, he called to his wife Párvati to come and take her food too before it got cold. She pleaded that she had not yet finished repeating, according to her daily wont, the thousand names of Vishnu : whereupon her husband instructed her that it would suffice if she said the mere name of Ráma once, for that had as much virtue as all the thousand. She at once believed him and complied ; and the god was so pleased at her ready faith that in her honor he assumed the Ardha-láśi, or half male, half female form.

Dohá 23.

Devotion to Ráma is for the faithful Tulsi Dás like the rainy season for the rice-fields ; but the two glorious consonants in Ráma's name are like the months of Sáwan and Bhadon.

Chaupái 20.

Two sweet and gracious syllables, the eyes as it were of the soul, easy to remember, satisfying every wish, a gain in this world and felicity in the next ; most delightful to utter, to hear, or to remember ; as dear to Tulsi as the inseparable Ráma and Lukshman. My love is inflamed as I speak of these mystic syllables, as intimately connected as the universal soul and the soul of man ; twin brothers like Nara and Náráyan ; preservers of the world ; redeemers of the elect ; bright jewels in the ears of beauteous Faith ; pure and beneficent as the sun and the moon ; like sweetness and contentment, the inseparable attributes of ambrosia ; like the tortoise and serpent, supporters of the world ; like the bee and lotus of a pious soul ; and as sweet to the tongue as Hari and Balaráma were sweet to Jasodá.

Dohá 24.

Like a royal umbrella and jewelled diadem over all the other letters of the alphabet shine the two consonants in Ráma's name.¹

Chaupái 21.

A name may be regarded as equivalent to what is named, the connection being such as subsists between a master and servant. Both name and form are shadows of the lord, who, rightly understood, is unspeakable and uncreated. They are sometimes wrongly distinguished as greater and less, but the wise will understand my explanation of the difference between them. See, now, the form is subordinate to the name, for without the name you cannot come to a knowledge of the

¹ The allusion is to the form the letters *r* and *m* take when written above the line.

form; if the very form be in your hand, still without knowing the name it is not recognized; but meditate on the name without seeing the form, and your soul is filled with devotion.¹ The mystery of name and form is unspeakable and cannot be told, but delightful to those who have intuition of it; the name acting as a witness between the material and immaterial form of the deity, and being a guide and interpreter to both.

Dohá 25.

Place the name of Ráma as a jewelled lamp at the door of your lips and there will be light, as you will, both inside and out.

Chaupái 22.

As his tongue repeats this name, the ascetic wakes to life, his thoughts free from passion and all detached from the world; he enjoys the incomparable felicity of God, who is unspeakable, unblemished, without either name or form. Those who would understand mysteries, by repeating this name understand them; the religious, who repeat this name absorbed in contemplation, become workers of miracles² and

1 To the European reader all this panegyric of the Divine name will probably at first sight appear extravagant and absurd. But from the Hindu point of view it is reasonable enough, and *mutatis mutandis*, may be paralleled by many similar expressions in the writings of Catholic theologians, as for example the following:—

Sancta oratio, brevis et laetandum, facilis ad tenendum, dulcis ad cogitandum, fortis ad: . . . *à Kempis.*

Suo sanctissimo nomine . . . literis constat, confert quotidie veniam peccatoribus.—*P. Pelbert.*

Nomen tuum devote nominari non potest sine nominantis utilitate.—*S. Bonaventura.*

Nomen solum sufficit ad medendum; nam pestis tam efficax nulla sic hæret, quæ ad nomen non cedat continuo.—*Ricardus de S. Laurentio.*

Spiritus maligni diffugiunt, audito nomine, velut ab igne.—*S. Bridget.* Omnes dæmones verentur hoc nomen, et timent, qui audientes statim relinquunt animam de unguibus quibus tenebant eam.—*S. Bridget.*

Gloriosum et admirabile est nomen; qui illud retinent, non expavescent in puncto, mortis.—*S. Bonaventura.*

Nomen plenum est omni dulcedine et suavitate divina.—*Honorius.*

2 The miraculous powers that can be acquired by perfect saints, or siddhahs, are reckoned as eight in number, and are called *animit, mahima, garimá, laghimá, prápti, prákāmya, isitwi, and vasittwi*. These words denote the faculty—1st, of becoming infinitely small; 2nd, of becoming infinitely great; 3rd, of becoming infinitely heavy; 4th of becoming infinitely light; 5th, of obtaining whatever one wishes; 6th, of doing whatever one wishes; 7th, of absolute supremacy; 8th, of absolute subjugation. Compare the four gifts of beatitude as enumerated by Catholic theologians, viz.—1st, Agility, by which the soul can in an instant descend from the height of heaven to earth; 2ndly, Brightness by which [according to S. Augustine] each blessed soul is so much more luminous than the sun as the sun is brighter than any other celestial body; 3rdly, Subtility, by which the soul can penetrate a mountain, in the same way as a ray of light passes through a diamond; 4thly, Impassibility, by which it is exempt from

acquire the power of rendering themselves invisible and the like ; those who repeat it when burdened with affliction are freed from their troubles and become happy. Thus there are in the world four kinds of Râma-worshippers, all four good, holy, and beneficent ; but of these four sages they are the most dear to the lord who wisely rely upon his name. His name is great in the four Vedas and in all the four ages of the world, but in this fourth age especially there is no other hope.

Dohâ 26.

Free from sensual passions and absorbed in devout affection to Râma, the soul disports itself like a fish in the ambrosial lake of his beloved name.

Chaupâi. 23.

The Supreme may be regarded either as unconditioned or as incarnate ; under either aspect it is unspeakable, unfathomable, without beginning and without parallel. To my mind the name is greater than both, for it has prevailed to bring both under its sway. My friends must not take this as an exaggeration on my part, for I say it confidently and with sincere devotion. This dual distinction of the Supreme is like the two kinds of fire, which is either potential in the wood or visible externally ; each is in itself unapproachable but is easily approached by means of the name ; and therefore I say that the name is greater than either Brahm or Râma. For the one immortal, true, sentient, complete, and blissful Brahm is all-pervading ; yet though such an unchangeable lord is in our very soul, the whole creation is in slavery and wretchedness, till he is revealed in definite shape, and is energized by the name ; as a jewel is not valued till it is so called.

Dohâ 27.

Thus the virtue of the name is infinite and transcends the Supreme, and in my judgment is greater than Râma himself.

Chaupái 24.

From the love that he bore to his followers, Ráma took the form of a man and by himself enduring misery secured their happiness. By incessantly and devoutly repeating his name, all the faithful may attain to felicity. Ráma himself redeemed only one woman, the ascetic's wife ;¹ but his name has corrected the errors of millions of sinners. To gratify the Rishi Visvamitra, Ráma wrought the destruction of Suketu's daughter Táraká with her son Mária and his army ; but as the sun puts an end to night, so his name has scattered all crime and pain and despair. In his own person Ráma broke the bow of Siva, but his glorious name has broken the fear of death ;² the Lord himself restored to life only the forest of Dandaka,³ but his name has sanctified countless generations ; the son of Raghu destroyed many demons, but his name has destroyed all the evil of the world.

Dohá 28.

Raghnáth conferred immortality on Savari and the vulture Jatáyu⁴ and his other faithful servants ; but his name, precious theme of the Vedas, has delivered innumerable wretches.

Chaupái 25.

Ráma, as all men know, extended his protection to Sugriva and Vibhíshana ; but his name has protected countless supplicants, shining forth gloriously in the world and the Veda.

1 Ahalyá, the wife of the Rishi Gautama, having been seduced by the god Indra, was cursed by her indignant lord, and doomed to remain alone and invisible in the forest for thousands of years, till Ráma should come and redeem her.

2 Here is a play upon words which cannot be preserved in the translation, for in the first half of the couplet the words *dhara* is to be taken as a name of Siva, while in the second half it means life or rather death, since, according to Hindú ideas, all conscious life is merely a preparation for inevitable death. Compare Milton's expression :—" This earthly load of death called life, which us from life doth sever."

3 Dandaka is the name of the pathless forest near the Godavari, where Sita was stolen away by Rávan.

4 The bird Jatáyu stopped the chariot in which Sita was being carried off by Rávan and was mortally wounded by the giant, but lived long enough to give Ráma tidings of his beloved. In return for his faithful services Ráma and Lakshman themselves performed his funeral rites,

Ráma assembled a host of bears and monkeys, and even then had no little trouble to build his bridge; his name can dry up the ocean of life; meditate thereon, O ye faithful. Ráma killed in battle Rávan and all his family, and returned with Síta¹ to his own city, a king to Avadh, his capital, while gods and saints hymned his praises; but his servants, if only they affectionately meditate on his name, have no difficulty in vanquishing the whole army of error, and absorbed in devotion live at ease, without even a dream of sorrow.

Dohí 29.

The name is greater than either Brahm or Ráma, and is the best gift of the best giver; this Mahádeva knew when he selected it from the hundred *crores*² of verses in the Rámáyana.

Chaupái 26.

By the power of this name the blessed god of curst attire, even the great Siva, acquired immortality; by the power of this name Sukadeva, Sanat-kumára, and all saints, sages, and ascetics have enjoyed heavenly raptures: Nárada too acknowledged its power, himself as dear to Hara and Hari as Hari is dear to the world; by repeating this name Prahlád, through the Lord's grace, became the crown of the faithful.³ Dhruva in his distress repeated the name of Hari, and was rewarded by a fixed and incomparable station in the heavens;⁴ by me-

1 Sugriva, the monkey chief, as told at full length later on in the poem, assisted Ráma in his search for Síta; and Ráma rewarded him by installing him as sovereign of Kishindhyá in the place of his brother Báli. Similarly, Vibhishana was made king of Lanká in the room of Rávan.

2 Of these hundred crores it is said that Siva distributed 33 crores to each of the three worlds. The one crore that remained over he similarly divided into three sets of 33 lakhs each; the odd lakh into three sets of 33 thousand each; the odd thousand again into three sets of three hundred each; the odd hundred into three sets of thirty-three each, and finally the one remaining *shuka* into three sets of ten letters each. The two letters that remained over, being the two consonants in the name of Ráma, he kept for himself, as containing the gist of the whole matter.

3 Prahlád, the pious son of the impious Hiranya Kasipu, who was destroyed by Vishnu in the Narsinh avatar, was made equal to Indra for life and finally united with Vishnu.

4 Dhruva, the son of Utanapáda, being slighted by his stepmother left his home with the determination of winning himself a name in the world. By the advice of the seven Rishis, he devoted himself to the service of Vishnu and was finally exalted by the god to the heavens, where he shines as the pole-star.

ditating on this holy name Hanumán won and kept the affection of Ráma ; by the power of Hari's name Ajámil¹ and the elephant and the harlot all three obtained salvation : why further extend the list? not even the incarnate Ráma could exhaust it.

Dohá 30.

The name of Ráma is as the tree of paradise, the centre of all that is good in this wicked world ; and whoever meditates upon it becomes (says Tulsi Dás) transformed as it were from a vile hemp-stick into a sweet-smelling tulsi plant.

Chaupái 27.

In all four ages of the world ; in all time, past, present, or future ; in the three spheres of earth, heaven and hell ; any creature that repeats this name becomes blessed. This is the verdict of the Veda, the Puránas and all the saints—that love of Ráma is the fruit of all virtue. In the first age, contemplation ; in the second age, sacrifice ; in the Dvápar age, temple-worship was the appointed propitiation ; but in this vile and impure iron age, where the soul of man floats like a fish in an ocean of sin, in these fearful times, the name is the only tree of life, and by meditating on it all commotion is stilled. In these evil days neither good deeds, nor piety, nor spiritual wisdom is of any avail, but only the name of Ráma : his name is as it were the wisdom and

¹ According to the history given in the 6th Skandha of the Sri Bhagavat, Ajámil was a Bráhman of Kanauj, of most dissolute and abandoned life. By a happy chance the youngest of the ten sons whom he had by a prostitute was named Náráyan, and the father when at the point of death happened to summon him to his side. But the god Náráyan, thus casually invoked, himself came in answer to the call and rescued the guilty soul from the demons that were about to carry it off to hell.

The story of the elephant is given in the 8th Skandha of the same Purána. An alligator had seized him by the foot while bathing, and though he struggled desperately for 2,000 years, he was unable to rid himself of his enemy, and he was deserted by all his wives and children. He then began to give himself up for lost ; but reflecting on the pertinacity of the alligator, he came to the conclusion that the creature must be the embodiment of all the sins he had committed in previous existences and that god alone could save him. He therefore addressed a fervent prayer to Náráyan, who thus invoked by name came down from heaven and with his discus Sudarsan cut off the alligator's head and delivered the suppliant.

The 8th chapter of the 11th Skandha gives the story of the penitent prostitute, Pingala.

the might of Hanumán to expose and destroy the Kálanemi-like¹ wiles of the wicked world.

Dohá 31.

As Narsinh was manifested to destroy the enemy of heaven, Hiranya-kasipu, and protect Prahlád, so is Ráma's name for the destruction of the world and the protection of the pious.

Chaupái 28.

By repeating this name, whether in joy or in sadness, in action or in repose, bliss is diffused all around. Meditating upon it and bowing my head to Raghunáth, I compose these lays in his honour; he will correct all my defects, whose mercy is mercy inexhaustible. Thou art my good lord, I thy poor servant; bear this in mind and graciously protect me. The world and scripture alike declare these to be the characteristics of a good master, that he hears prayer and acknowledges affection. Rich or poor, villager or citizen, learned or unlearned, pure or impure, good poet or bad poet, all according to their ability extol their king as being good, amiable, and gracious, lord of incomparable compassion; and he hears and accepts their honest attempts, recognizing in their words both devotion and a measure of ability. This is the way with earthly kings, and Ráma is their crown: he is satisfied with simple piety, though in one who is duller and feebler of intellect even than I am.

Dohá 32-33.

The merciful Ráma will regard the love and zeal of his poor servant, he who made a ship out of a rock and wise ministers out of monkeys and bears; although I am a byword,

¹ Kálanemi was the uncle of Rávan, who commissioned him to kill Hanumán. Accordingly he assumed the garb of a devotee and retired to a magic hermitage, where he was soon after visited by Hanumán. The latter accepted the hospitality of the holy man as he took him to be, but before eating went to a pond close by to bathe. As soon as he put his foot in the water, it was seized by a crocodile, which, however, he soon killed; when from its dead body sprung a demon who laid a curse, who informed him of Kálanemi's whereabouts. Thereupon he threw his tail round the demon's neck and strangled him. The incident is related in Book vi, dohás 55, 56.

and every one says Rāma is exposed to ridicule, in that he, being such a lord, has such a servant as Tulsi Dās.

Chaupái 29.

My presumption is indeed very sad and villainous enough to disgust hell itself; I am quite aware of this and tremble to think of it; but Rāma never dreamt of taking notice. The lord listened and with his own eyes attentively considered my faith, and thereupon applauded my devout intention. Though my story is spoilt by the telling, Rāma is satisfied and accounts it good, since the will is good. The lord is not mindful of a chance fault, but on every occasion he considers the heart. Thus the very crime for which he like a huntsman killed Báli was in turn the sin of Sugrīva, and again of Vibhīshan; but in their case Rāma did not dream of censure, but honoured them both at his meeting with Bharat and commended in open court.

Dohá 34-36.

The monkeys to that scrambled up in the boughs of the tree under which the lord sat, even these he held dear as himself: says Tulsi, there is no master so generous as Rāma. O Rāma, thy goodness is good to all, and if so, then good to Tulsi also. Thus declaring my merits and defects and again bowing my head to all, I proceed to tell the glorious acts of Raghubar, by the sound of which all the sin of the world is effaced.

Chaupái 30.

Now listen all in friendly wise while I relate the story as I have heard it, as it was communicated by Yājñavalkya to the great sage Bharadvāja. It was first of all composed by Siva and graciously revealed to Umā, and again declared to Kāka-bhusundi, known to be chief among the votaries of Rāma. From him Yājñavalkya received it and he recited it to Bharadvāja. These listeners and reciters were of equal virtue and had an equal insight into Hari's sportive actions. Their intellect comprehended all time, as it were a plum in

the palm of the hand. Other intelligent votaries of Hari have also in different ways heard, understood and spoken.

Dohi 37--38.

As for myself, I heard the story from my master at Sukár-khet (*i.e.*, Soron),¹ not understanding it, when I was quite a child and had no sense. How could such a dull creature, being both ignorant and eaten up with worldly impurities, understand so mysterious a legend and a dialogue between such sage interlocutors?

Chaupai 31.

But my master repeated it time after time, till at length I understood as much as could be expected ; and I now put it down in the vulgar tongue for the better comprehension of my ideas ; with a heart inspired by Hari and using all the little sense, judgment, and ability that I possess. The story that I have to tell clears my own doubts as it does every other error and delusion, and is a raft on which to cross the ocean of existence. The story of Ráma is a resting-place for the intellect ; a universal delight ; destroyer of worldly impurity ; an antidote to the venom of passion ; a match to enkindle the fire of wisdom ; the cow of plenty in this iron age ; an elixir to make good men immortal ; a terrestrial stream of nectar ; a destroyer of death ; a snake to devour toad-like error ; the annihilator of hell, like as Párvati on behalf of gods and saints annihilated the army of demons ; like as Lakshmi was born of the sea, so conceived in the assembly of saints ; immoveable as the earth that supports all the weight of creation ; like the Jamuná, to put to shame the angel of death ; like Kási, the saviour of all living creatures ; as dear to Ráma as the pure tulsi ; as dear to Tulsi Dás as his own heart's desire ; as dear to Siya as the daughter of Mount Mekal (*i.e.*, the Narmadá), bestower of all perfection and prosperity ; like Aditi, gracious mother of all the gods ; the perfect outcome of love and devotion to Raghubar.

¹ Soron, the modern name, is a corruption of Sūkara-grāma (Boar-town). The place is still much frequented by pilgrims, the principal concourse being on the festival of the Varáha (or Boar)avatár. Sūkara-grāma=Sūar-gāwn=Sūarānw=Soron.

Dohá 39.

The story of Ráma is as the river Mandákini and a good intention like Mount Chitrakút, while sincere affection is the forest where Ráma and Síta desported themselves.

Chaupái 32.

The legend of Ráma is like the delectable wishing stone ; or as a fair jewel for the bridal adornment of saintly wisdom ; His perfection is the joy of the whole world, fraught with the blessings of virtue, wealth, and eternal salvation : a true teacher of wisdom, asceticism and spiritual contemplation ; like the physician of the gods to heal the fearful diseases of life ; the very parent of devotion to Síta and Ráma ; the seed of all holy vows and pieties ; the destroyer of sin, of pain, and of sorrow ; our guardian in this world and the next ; the Prime Minister and the General of Kingly Counsel ; a very Agastya,¹ to drink up the illimitable ocean of desire ; a young lion in the forest of life to attack the wild elephants of lust, anger, and sensual impurity ; as dear to Siva as the presence of a highly honoured guest ; as an abundant shower to quench the fire of meanness ; a potent spell against the venom of the world ; effacing from the forehead the deep brand of evil destiny ; dispelling the darkness of error like the rays of the sun ; like a shower on a rice-field refreshing the aridity of prayer ; like the tree of paradise granting every desire ; like Hari and Hara, accessible and gracious to all servants ; like the stars in the clear autumn sky of the poet's mind ; like the richness of life enjoyed by Ráma's votaries ; like the perfect felicity that is the reward of virtue ; like the assembly of the faithful in benevolence and composure ; like a swan in the pure lake of the believer's soul ; like the abundant flood of Ganga's purifying stream.

Dohá 40—41.

Ráma's perfect merit is like a strong fire to consume the

¹ As Agastya was one day worshipping by the seaside, a wave came and washed away some of his altar furniture, whereupon in three draughts he drank the whole ocean dry.

dry wood of schism and heresy, evil practices and worldly deceit, hypocrisy and infidelity. His acts are like the rays of the full moon that give pleasure to all, but are specially consoling to the souls of the pious like the lotus and the *chakor*.

Chaupái 33.

All the questions that Bhavāni asked, with Sankara's replies thereto, I now proceed to give in substance, with agreeable diversity of style. No one is to be astonished if he should happen not to have heard any particular legend before. A philosopher, on hearing for the first time any marvellous acts, will feel no surprise, reasoning thus with himself; I know well that there is no limit in the world to the stories about Rāma, for he has in various forms become incarnate, and verses of the Rāmāyana are some thousand millions in number; his glorious acts are of myriad diversity, and have been sung by sages in countless ways.¹ So indulge no doubts, but listen reverently and devoutly.

Dohá 42.

Rāma is infinite, his perfections infinite, and his legends of immeasurable expansion; men of enlightened understanding will therefore wonder at nothing they hear.

Chaupái 34.

Having in this manner put away all doubt, I place on my head the dust from the lotus feet of my master, and with folded hands making a general obeisance, that no fault may attach to my telling of the story, and bowing my head reverently before Siva, I proceed to sing of Rāma's excellent glory. In this *Sambat* year of 1631, I write with my head at Hari's feet, on Tuesday the 9th of the sweet month of Chait, at the city of Avadh, on the day when the scriptures say Rāma was born; when the spirits of all holy places there

¹ "Truth has never been grasped on all sides, nor has ever been embraced entirely by the mind of man; and no one can gaze attentively on that truth which is always old, without discovering there beauties that are always new." These words of Abp. Dechamps express in abstract form the very same idea that the Hindú poet has presented in the concrete.

assemble, with demons, serpents, birds, men, saints, and gods, and there offer homage to Raghunáth, while the enlightened keep the great birthday festival and hymn Ráma's high glory.

Dohá 43.

Pious crows bathe in the all-purifying stream of the Sarjú and murmur Ráma's name, while his dark and beautiful form is imprinted on their hearts.

Chaupái 35.

The Vedas and Puránas declare that sin is cleansed by the mere sight or touch of this holy stream as well as by bathing in or drinking of it. Its immeasurable grandeur is indescribable even by the pure intelligence of Sarasvati. The city, exalting to Ráma's heaven,¹ beautiful, celebrated through all worlds, is so all-purifying that countless as is the number of animate species that result from the four modes of birth, yet every individual that is freed from the body at Avadh is free for ever. Knowing it to be in every way charming, a bestower of success and a mine of auspiciousness, I there made a beginning of my sacred song, which will destroy in those who hear it the mad phrensy of lust; its mere name—lake of Ráma's acts—serves to refresh the ear, while the soul like an elephant escaping from a forest on fire with lust, plunges into it and gains relief; delight of the sages, as composed by Sambhu, holy and beautiful; consuming the three illconditions of sin, sorrow and want; putting an end to the evil practices and impurities of the wicked world; first made by Mahádeva and buried in the deep lake of his own soul till at an auspicious moment he declared it to Umá; thus Siva looking into his own soul and rejoicing gave it the excellent name of Rám-charit-mánas.² And this is the blessed legend that I repeat: hear it, good people, reverently and attentively.

1 The compound may also mean—giving a home to Ráma—and probably both meanings are intended.

2 From this it well be seen that the name which Tulsi Dás himself gave to his poem was not 'the Rámáyana,' but 'the Rám-charit-mánas,' a name which may be interpreted to mean either the lake or the soul of Ráma's acts. In the stanza above translated the word is first taken in the one sense and then in the other, and as there is no English word with the same double signification, some obscurity is unavoidable.

Dohá 44.

Now meditating upon Uná and upon him who has a ball emblazoned on his standard viz., Mahábalá, I explain the connection, showing how it is a lake and in what manner it is formed, and for what reason it has spread through the world.

Chapú 36.

By the blessing of Śaṅkha a bright idea has come into the poet Tula's mind regarding the Rāma-chaitanyas, which I will state as well as I can, subject to the correction of those good people whose attention I invite. The heart is as it were a deep place in a land of good thoughts, the Vedas and Purāṇas are the sea, and the saints are as clouds, which rain down praises of Rāma in sweet, grateful and auspicious showers; the sportive actions related of him are like the inherent purity and cleansing power of rain-water; while devotion, which is beyond the power of words to describe, is its sweetness and coolness. When such a shower falls on the rice-fields of virtue, it gives new life to the faithful, and as its holy drops fall to the earth they are collected in the channel supplied by the years, and flowing into the lake of the soul fill it and then settle down permanently, cool, beautiful and refreshing.

Dohá 45.

This pure and holy lake has four beautiful *ghoṭis* viz., the four charming dialogues contrived by divine wisdom.

Chapú 37.

The seven Books are its beautiful flights of steps, which the eyes of the soul delight to look upon; the unqualified and unsullied greatness of Raghupati may be described as its clear and deep expanse; the glory of Rāma and Sita as its ambrosial water; the similes as its pretty wavelets; the stanzas as its beautiful lotus beds; the elegance of expression as lovely mother-of-pearl: the *chhands sorathás*, and couplets as many-

1 The words may also bear the following secondary meaning; I relate the whole history, showing how the great soul became incarnate, and why it dwelt in the world.

coloured lotus flowers: the incomparable sense, sentiment, and language as the pollen, filaments and fragrance of the lotus; the exalted action as beautiful swarms of bees; the sage moral reflections as swans; the rhythm, involutions, and other poetical artifices as diverse graceful kinds of fish; the precepts regarding the four ends of life, the wise sayings, the thoughtful judgments, the nine styles of composition,¹ the prayers, penance, abstraction and asceticism, of which examples are given, are all beautiful living creatures in the lake; eulogies on the faithful, the saints and the holy name are like flocks of water-birds; the religious audience are like circling mango groves, and their faith like the spring season; the expositions of all the phases of devotion and of tenderness and generosity are like the trees and canopying creepers; self-denial and holy vows are their flowers, and wisdom their fruit; the love for Hari's feet as the sound of the Vedas: and all other stories and episodes as the parrots and cuckoos and many kinds of birds.

Dolú 46.

The hearer's emotion is some grove, garden or parterre, where sportive birds symbolise his delight and Piety the gardener pours a stream of devotion from the water-pot of his eyes.

Chaupái 38.

Those who diligently recite these lays are like the vigilant guardians of the lake; the men and women who reverently hear them, these excellent people are like its owners. Sensual wretches are like the cranes and crows that have no part in such a pond nor ever come near it; for here are no prurient and seductive stories like snails, frogs and scum on the water, and therefore the lustful crow and greedy

¹ The nine poetical styles (or Indian Muses) are the *Śringár-ras*, or erotic; the *Háśyaras*, or comic; the *Karuná-ras*, or elegiac; the *Bir-ras*, or heroic; the *Raudra-ras*, or tragic; the *Bhavanak-ras*, or melancholic; the *Vibhatsa-ras*, or satiric; the *Shánt-ras*, or didactic: and the *Adbhut-ras*, or sensational.

crane, if they do come, are disappointed. There is much difficulty in getting to this lake, and it is only by the favour of Râma that any one reaches it. For bad company makes much steepness and difficulty in the road ; their evil sayings are so many tigers, lions and serpents ; the various entanglements of domestic affairs are vast insurmountable mountains ; sensual desires are like a dense forest full of wild delusion ; and unsound reasoning is a raging flood.

Dohi 47.

For those who have not the support of faith, nor the company of the saints, nor fervent love for Raghunâth, for them this lake is very hard of access.

Chaupâi 39.

Again, if any one laboriously makes his way to it, but becomes over-powered by sleep and feverishness, strange torpor and numbness settle on his soul, and though he is on the spot, the luckless wretch makes no ablution. Having neither bathed in the lake nor drunk of it he goes away in his pride, and when some one comes to inquire of him he abuses it. But no difficulties deter those whom Râma regards with affection. They reverently bathe, are relieved from the fierce flames of sin, sorrow, and pain, and being sincerely devoted to Râma will never abandon it. If, my friend, you would bathe in this lake, be diligent to keep company with the good. As for myself, having thus with the mind's eye contemplated it, my poetical faculty has become clear and profound, my heart swells with joy and rapture and overflows in a torrent of ecstasie devotion. My song pours on like a river flooded with Râma's bright renown ; like the river Sarju, fountain of bliss, with piety and theology for its two fair banks ; a holy stream rejoicing the pious soul (or born of the Mânas lake,) sweeping away all worldly impurities like trees and roots on its bank.

Dohá 48.

The three kinds of hearers in the assembly are like the towns, villages, and hamlets on the river-side ; while the saints are like the incomparable city of Avadh, full of all that is auspicious.

Chaupái 40.

The beautiful Sarju, as it were the glory of Ráma has united with the Ganges of devotion ; and the magnificent river Son, like the warlike power of Ráma and his brother, has joined them as a third. Between the two, the Ganges stream of devotion shines clear in its wisdom and self-control, while the combined flood destroying the triple curse of humanity is absorbed in the mighty ocean of very Ráma. The united stream of the Mánaś-born Sarju and the Ganges purifies the pious listener, while the various tales and episodes interspersed here and there are the groves and gardens on its opposite banks ; the details of the marriage and wedding procession of Umá and Śiva are like the innumerable fish in the water ; the joy and gladness that attended Ráma's birth are like beautiful swarms of bees and the ripple of the lake.

Dohá 49.

The childish sports of the four brothers are like the goodly lotus flowers ; the virtuous king and queen and their court like the bees and water-birds.

Chaupái 41.

The charming story of Śita's marriage like the bright gleam of the flashing river ; the many ingenious questions like the boats on the stream ; the appropriate and judicious answers like the boatmen ; again, the argumentative discussions show like crowding travellers ; the wrath of Bhrigu-náth like the rushing torrent ; Ráma's soft speech like the well-arranged ghats ; the marriage festivities of Ráma and Lakshman like the grateful swell of the tide ; the thrill of pleasure that spreads through the delighted audience like the ecstatic feelings of the virtuous bathers ; the auspicious pre-

parations for marking Rāma's forehead with the *tilak* like the crowds assembled on holidays ; and like river mud is Kaikeyi's evil counsel, the cause of many calamities.

Dohā 50.

Like prayers and sacrifices effectual to remove every misfortune are Bharat's virtuous acts ; while the corruptions of the world and sinful men and slanderers are like the scum on the water and the cranes and crows.

Chaupāī 42.

This river of glory is beautiful in each of the six seasons bright and holy exceedingly at all times. The story of the marriage of Siva with the daughter of the snowy mountains is like the winter ; the glad rejoicings at the Lord's birth are like the dewy season ; the account of the preparations for Rāma's wedding are like the delightful and auspicious spring ; Rāma's intolerable banishment is like the hot weather, and the story of his rough journeyings like the blazing sun and the wind ; his encounters with fierce demons, by which he gladdens the hosts of heaven, are like the rains, that refresh the fields ; the prosperity of his reign, his meekness and greatness are like the clear, bountiful and lovely autumn¹ ; the recital of the virtues of Sita, that jewel of faithful wives, is as the undefiled and excellent water ; the amiability of Bharat as its unvarying coolness.

Dohā 51.

Their looks and words at meeting, their mutual love and laughter, the true fraternal affection of the four brothers, are as the water's sweet odour.

Chaupāī 43.

My suppliant address and self-depreciation and modesty correspond to the singular lightness of good water, which is anything but a defect. This marvellous lymph works its effect by the mere hearing, quenching the thirst of desire

¹ The six Hindu seasons to which allusion is here made are Hemant, winter; Sisir, the early spring; Basant, the spring; Grishm, the hot weather; Vārsha, the rains; and Sarad, the autumn.

and cleansing the soul of impurity; it resuscitates true love to Rāma and puts an end to all the sin and sorrow of the world; draining life of its weariness; comforting with true comfort; destroying sin and pain and poverty and error; dispelling lust and passion and phrensy and infatuation, and promoting pure intelligence and detachment from the world. Those who reverently drink or bathe in this stream, from their soul is effaced all sin and distress; those who do not cleanse their heart in it are wretches whom the world has ruined, turning back, hapless creatures, like a panting deer that has seen a river in a mirage!

Dohā 52—54.

Thus I have declared to the best of my ability the virtues of this excellent water, and having plunged my own soul in it, and ever remembering Bhavāni and Sankara, I proceed with my delectable story. I will first repeat in substance the original conversation, with the questions put by Bharadvāja when he found the Muni Yājñavalkya; and laying my soul at the lotus feet of Raghupati and thus securing his patronage, I will sing the meeting of the two great saints and their auspicious discourse.

Chaupāī 44.

At Prayāg lives the saint Bharadvāja, devoted beyond measure to Rāma's feet, a self-restrained ascetic full of sobriety and benevolence, supremely skilled in divine knowledge. In the month of Māgh, when the sun enters the sign of Capricorn, every one visits this chief of holy places; gods, demi-gods *kinnars*, and men in troops, all devoutly bathe in the triple flood and worship the lotus feet of Mādhava while they have the happiness of touching the imperishable fig-tree. At Bharadvāja's hallowed hermitage—so charming a spot that even the saint loved it—is ever a concourse of seers and sages come to bathe at the holiest of all holy places; and having with gladness performed their ablutions at break of day, they converse together on the glories of Hari.

Dohā 55.

Discussing the nature of the deity, the kinds of religious observance and the classification of primordial entities; and declaring faith in God to be the epitome of wisdom and spiritual detachment.¹

Chaupāī 45.

After thus bathing every day that the sun is in Capricorn, they again return each to his own cell, and every year there is a similar rejoicing when the saints meet for the annual ablution. On one occasion, when the bathing time was over, and all the holy men had left, Bharaḍvāja clasped by the feet and detained the supremely wise saint Yājñavalkya, and having reverently laved his lotus feet and seated him on a pre-eminent throne, he with religious ceremony extolled the saint's glory, and finally thus address him in mildest of tones, "Sir, I have a great doubt, while in your grasp are all the mysteries of the Veda; I am afraid and ashamed to speak, but if I speak not, I lose a great opportunity.

Dohā 56.

This, sir, is a maxim of all the saints, and is also declared by the Vedas and Purāṇas, that there is no sound wisdom in his breast who conceals aught from his ghostly father.

Chaupāī 46.

Remembering this, I lay bare my folly—take pity, my lord, on your faithful servant and dispel it. The might of Rāma's name is immeasurable; so tell the saints, the Purāṇas and the Vedic commentaries; the immortal Saṁhitā, who is the Lord Siva, the perfection of wisdom and goodness, is ever repeating it; though all the four groups of animate beings in the world attain to salvation if they die in his city Kāśī, yet O king of saints, it is by the virtue of Rāma's

¹ This couplet sums up the characteristics of the principal systems of Hindu philosophy: the Vedānta being chiefly concerned with and indeed defined as, *Brāhma Jijñāsa*, 'an inquiry into the nature of God'; the Mīmāṃsā being a system of ritualism and Vedic observances; the Sāṅkhya 'a synthetic enumeration' of the primary germs, or elements, out of which creation has been evolved; and the later eclectic Vaiṣṇava school declaring that the only one thing needful is *bhakti*, *devots* religious faith.'

name; and therefore Siva in his compassion enjoins its use. I ask of you, my lord, who is this Rāma? be gracious enough to instruct me. There is one Rāma, the prince of Avadh, whose acts are known throughout the world who suffered infinite distress by the loss of his wife, and waxing wrath slew Rāvan in battle.

Dohá 57.

Is it this Rāma, my lord or another, whose name Tripurāri is ever repeating? Ponder the matter well and tell me, O wisest and most faithful of men.

Chaupái 47.

Tell me the whole history in full, my master, so that my overpowering perplexity may be solved." Said Yājñavalkya with a smile,—“All the glory of Raghupati is known to you; you are a votary of his in heart, world and deed; I understand your stratagem. Wishing to hear the marvellous tale of Rāma's achievements, you have questioned me with an affectation of great simplicity. Listen then, my son, with devout attention while I repeat the fair legend, which vanquishes every monstrous error, as dread Devi vanquished the demon Mahishāsura, but which is drunk in by the saints as the light of the moon by the *chakor*. When a similar doubt was suggested by Bhavāni, Mahādeva expounded the matter:

Dohá 58.

And I now, as best I can, repeat their conversation, noting both its time and occasion; on hearing it, my friend, all difficulties vanish.

Chaupái 48.

Once upon a time, in the second age of the world, Sambhu visited the Rishi Agastya; with him went the mother of the world, the faithful Bhavāni. The hermit made obeisance, for he recognized them as the sovereigns of the universe, and recited the story of Rāma, with which Mahādeva was delighted. The hermit then asked him about true faith in Hari; and Sambhu instructed him, for he saw him to be deserving.

In such converse the mountain-lord Mahádeva passed some days there, but finally took his leave and returned home with the daughter of Daksha. Now at that time there had become incarnate, in the family of Raghu, Hari the destroyer of the burdens of the world, who at his father's word sorrowfully left the throne and wandered, immortal god though he was, in the Dandaka forest.

Dohá 59.

Siva kept pondering as he went. — 'How can I obtain a sight of him? for every one knows that the lord has become incarnate secretly; if I visit him, every one will know who he is.'

Sorathá 5.

In Sankara's heart was a great tumult, but Sati did not comprehend the mystery; says Tulsí, the hope of an interview filled his soul with agitation and his eyes with wistfulness.

Chaupáí 49.

'Rávan has obtained the boon of death at the hands of man only and the lord has willed Bráhma's word to come true. If I do not go to meet him, I shall ever regret it; but all that he could do he could not hit upon a plan. At the very time that he was thus lost in thought, the ten-headed Rávan, taking with him the vile Márícha, all at once assumed the form of a false deer and treacherously in his folly carried off Síta, not knowing the lord's great power. When Ráma returned with his brother from the chase and saw the empty hermitage his eyes filled with tears; like a mortal man distressed by the loss of his mistress, he wanders through the forest in search of her, he and his brother; and he who knows neither union nor bereavement manifested all the pangs of separation.

Dohá 60.

Ráma's ways are most mysterious; only the supremely wise can comprehend them; the dull of soul and the sensual imagine something quite different,

Chaupái 50.

Then it was that Sambhu saw Ráma, and great joy arose in his soul. His eyes were filled with the vision of the most beautiful, but it was no fitting time to make himself known, and he passed on exclaiming: 'Hail, Supreme Being, redeemer of the world.' But as he went on his way with Sati, his whole body thrilled with delight; and in Sati's soul, when she observed her lord's emotion, a great doubt arose,—'To Sankara, the universally adored and sovereign lord, gods, men and saints all bow the head; yet he has made obeisance to this prince, saluting him as the Supreme God, and is so enraptured with his beauty that it is only to-day he has felt what love is.

Dohá 61.

What! the omnipresent and unbegotten God, the creator, who has neither parts nor passions, and is no respecter of persons, whom not even the Veda can comprehend,¹ has he taken the form of a man?

Chaupái 51.

According to what Siva says, though Vishnu in heaven's behalf assumes a human shape, he remains all-wise: yet here as if quite at a loss, he is hunting for his wife, this fountain of wisdom, this lord of Lakshmi, this vanquisher of demons. Still Sambhu's words cannot be false, nor can his knowledge be gainsaid. Thus an infinite doubt has come into my mind, and there is no way of solving it.' Although Bhaváni did not speak out, Mahádeva can read the heart and knew her thoughts, and said,—“Listen to me, Sati; you are just like a woman, but you should not entertain these doubts; this is that Ráma, my special patron, whose story was sung by the Rishi Agastya; in whom I exhorted the

¹ The reference is to such texts as the following in the *Upanishads*: “From whom words turn back, together with the mind, the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue” (*Taittiriya*, II, 9). “The eye goes not thither, nor speech, nor mind” (*Kena*, I, 3). “Unthinkable, unspeakable” [*Mandukya*, 7]. The process of Christian theology is similarly negative and agnostic: it sets forth what God is not, rather than what He is; since it is impossible for the lower nature to know the higher.

saint to have faith, and who is ever worshipped by seers and sages.

Chapter 2.

Seers and sages, saints and hermits, fix on him their reverent gaze,
And in faint and trembling accents Holy Scripture hymns his praise.
He, the omnipresent spirit, lord of heaven and earth and hell,
To redeem his people, freely has vouchsafed with men to dwell."

Sarath 6.

Though he spoke thus time after time, his words made no impression upon her; and at last Mahādeva, recognizing Rāma's deceptive power, smiled and said:

Chapter 52.

"As the doubt in your mind is so great that it will not leave you till you have put the fact to the test, I will stay here in the shade of this fig-tree till you come back to me, after having evolved some device by which to satisfy your overpowering doubt." So Sati went by Siva's order, saying to herself,—“Come now, what shall I do?” while Sambhu reflected,—“There is mischief in store for Sati; her doubts will not yield to my arguments; truly no good can ever be brought about against the will of fate; whatever Rāma has ordained will come to pass, so why spin out any longer discussion.” So saying, he began the repetition of Hari's name, while Sati drew nigh to the Lord of grace.

Dohā 62.

After many an anxious thought she assumed the form of Sita and went and stood in the way where the king of heaven was coming.

Chapter 53.

When Lakshman saw her in her disguise, he was much astonished and perplexed. Wise as he was, he could say nothing, but discreetly waited for the revelation of the lord. He, the heavenly king, detected the deceit; for he sees all things alike and knows the heart, the all-wise lord Rāma, the mere thought of whom disperses error. Yet even him Sati

attempted to deceive—see how inveterate woman's nature is. But Rāma, acknowledging the effect of his own delusive power, with a sweet smile and folded hands saluted her, mentioning both her own name and that of her father, and added,—‘Where is Mahādeva, and why are you wandering alone in the forest?’

Dohā 63.

When she heard these simple but profound words, a great awe came upon her and she returned to Mahādeva, full of fear and distress.

Chaupāī 54.

‘I would not listen to Sankara, but must go and expose my folly to Rāma; now what answer can I give?’ Her distress was most grievous. Then Rāma, perceiving her vexation, manifested in part his glory, and as Sati went on her way she beheld a marvellous vision; in front of her were Rāma, Sīta and Lakshman; when again she looked back, there too she saw the Lord with his brother and Sīta in beautiful apparel; whichever way she turned her eyes, there was the lord enthroned with saints and learned doctors ministering to him. Innumerable Sivas and Brāhmas and Vishnus, each excelling in majesty, bowing at his feet and doing homage; all the host of heaven with their different attributes.

Dohā 64

Sati too and Sarasvati and Lakshmi in marvellous multiplicity of form, according to the various appearances assumed by their lords, Brāhma, Vishnu and Mahādeva.

Chaupāī 55.

Each separate vision of Rāma was attended by all the gods and their wives, and by the whole animate creation with all its multitudinous species. But while the adoring gods appeared in diverse dresses, there was no diversity of form in Rāma. Though she saw many Rāmas, and with him an oft-repeated Sīta, it was always the same Rāma, the same Lakshman, and the same Sīta. Sati was awe-stricken as she gazed; with

fluttering heart and unconscious frame she closed her eyes and sank upon the ground. When again she looked up, she saw nothing, and oft bowing her head at Râma's feet, she returned to the spot where Mahâdeva was waiting for her.

Dohâ 65.

When she drew near, he smiled and asked if all were well, saying,—‘Tell me now the whole truth, how did you put him to the test?’

Chaupti 56.

Sati remembered the glory of the lord and in her awe concealed the truth from Siva, saying: ‘O sir, I tried no test, but like you simply made obeisance. I was confident that what you said could not be false.’ Then Sankara perceived by contemplation and understood all that Sati had done, and bowed to the might of Râma's delusive power, which had been sent forth to put a lying speech into Sati's mouth. ‘The will of heaven and fate are strong;’ thus he reflected, in great distress of mind; ‘as Sati has taken Sita's form, if now I treat her as my wife, my past devotion will be all cancelled, and it will be a sin to me.

Dohâ 66.

My love is too great to be forgotten, yet to indulge it is criminal.’ He uttered not a word aloud, but in his heart was sore distress.

Chaupti 57.

At last, having bowed his head at Râma's feet and meditated on his name, he thus resolved and made a vow in his mind,—‘So long as Sati remains as she is now, I will never touch her.’ With this firm determination he turned homewards, repeating his Râma rosary, and as he went there was a jubilant cry in the heaven,—‘Glory to thee, Mahâdeva, for thy staunch devotion; who other but thou, O lord most strong in faith, would make such a vow?’ Sati was troubled when she heard the heavenly voice and tremblingly asked Siva,—‘Tell me, O true and gracious lord, what

was the vow?' But though she asked once and again he told her not.

Dohá 67.

Then she guessed of herself,—‘The all-wise has discovered it all, though I attempted to deceive him ; silly and senseless woman that I am.’

Sorathá 7.

Water and milk if mixed together are both sold as milk ; but see how like the union is to that of lovers ; the introduction of a drop of acid, or of a lie, at once causes a separation.

Chaupái 58.

Deep in thought and reflecting on what she had done, no words could express her infinite sorrow, and she kept saying to herself,—‘The gracious but impenetrable Siva has not openly mentioned my offence, but my lord has abandoned me.’ Thus disturbed in soul by Sankara’s sternness and thinking of her sin, she could say nothing, but all the more smouldered within like a furnace. When Mahádeva saw her so sorrowful, he began to amuse her with pleasant tales, relating various legends all the way till he came to Kailás. Then recalling his vow, he seated himself under a fig-tree in the attitude of contemplation and by an immediate control of all his members passed into a long and unbroken trance.¹

Dohá 68.

There Sati dwelt in Kailás, sorrowing grievously ; not a soul knew her secret, but each day that she passed was like an age.

¹ Literally translated, the above passage would stand thus :—“Vrisha-ketu, perceiving that Sati was distressed, began to amuse her with pleasant tales, relating various legends all the way till Visvanáth arrived at Kailás. Then re-calling his vow, Sambhu seated himself under a fig-tree in the attitude of contemplation and by an immediate control of all his members Sankara passed into a long and unbroken trance.” As the use of many different names. Vrisha-ketu, Visvanáth, Sambhu, and Sankara—all to designate the same person, viz., Mahádeva—is likely to perplex an English reader, I have in this and similar passages omitted them and simply substituted the personal pronoun,

Chaupái 59.

Ever growing more sick at heart, "When shall I emerge from this sea of trouble? I who put a slight upon Ráma and took my husband's word to be a lie. The Creator has repaid me and has done as I deserved. Now, O God, think not thus within thyself that I can live without Sankara. The anguish of my heart is beyond words; but I take comfort when I remember Ráma, whom men call the lord of compassion, and whom the Vedas hymn as remover of distress. Him I supplicate with folded hands. May this body of mine be speedily dissolved. As my love for Siva is unforgotten in thought, word and deed, and as his word cannot fail,

Dohá 69.

Do thou, O impartial lord, hear my prayer and speedily devise a plan by which I may die without pain and avoid this intolerable calamity."

Chaupái 60.

Thus sorrowing and weighed down by grievous and unutterable pain, the royal lady had passed 87,000 years, when the immortal Sambhu awoke from his trance and began to repeat Ráma's name. Then Síta perceived that he had returned to consciousness and went and bowed herself at his feet. He gave her a seat in his presence and began reciting the divine praises. Now at that time Daksha was reigning, and the Creator seeing him to be thoroughly fit had made him a king of kings. But when he had obtained great dominion he waxed exceeding proud. Never was a man born into the world whom kingship did not intoxicate.

Dohá 70.

By the priests' suggestion all began preparing a great sacrifice for Daksha, and the gods who accept oblations were all courteously invited to attend.

Chaupái 61.

Kinnars, serpents, saints, Gandharvas, all the gods and their wives, except Vishnu, Bráhma and Mahádeva, proceeded

thither in their chariots. Sati saw the strangely beautiful procession going through the sky, with the heavenly nymphs singing so melodiously that any saint's meditation would be broken by the sound of it, and she asked Siva its reason ; whereupon he explained. Then was she glad when she heard of her father's sacrifice and thought,—“ If my lord will allow me, I will make it an excuse for going to stay a few days with him.” It was such sore pain to leave her lord, that she long dare not speak, remembering her transgression ; but at last with soft and timid voice, overflowing with modesty and affection, she said :—

Dohá 71.

‘ There is great rejoicing at my father's house ; with my gracious lord's permission I will duteously go and see it.’

Chaupái 62.

Said he,—‘ It would please me well ; but there is a difficulty, as you have not been invited. Daksha has summoned all his other daughters, but has left you out on account of his quarrel with me, for he took offence at my behaviour in Bráhma's court, and that is the reason he slights me to-day. If you go without being asked, there will be loss of temper, love and honour. One may go, no doubt, without an invitation to the house of a friend, or master, or father, or confessor ; but no good can result from going where an enemy is present.’ Thus Sambhu warned her over and over again ; but fate was too strong, she would not be convinced. Said the lord,—‘ To go unmasked is not right, as I take it.’

Dohá 72.

When Mahádeva saw that no amount of talking would make her stay, he appointed his chief ministers as her escort and allowed her to depart.

Chaupái 63.

When Bhaváni came to her father's house, from fear of Daksha no one greeted her ; only her mother met her kindly

and her sisters received her with a smile. Daksha uttered not a word of salutation and burned with rage to see her. When Sati went to look at the sacrifice, she could nowhere find anything for Sambhu : then Sankara's words came back into her mind, and her heart so burned within her at the slight upon her lord, that the former pain she had felt was not to be compared to her present emotion. There are grievous pains in the world, but nothing so bad as a family slight. The more she thought of it, the more furious she grew, though her mother tried hard to pacify her.

Dohá 73.

This insult to Siva could not be borne ; her soul refused to be pacified : and thrusting away from her the shrinking crowd, she cried in wild accents :—

Chaupái 64.

“ Hear, all ye elders of the assembly, who have talked over this slight upon Sankara. Speedily shall ye reap your due reward, and dearly shall my father rue it. Whenever blasphemy is spoken against the saints, or Sambhu, or Vishnu, the ordinance is either to tear out the blasphemer's tongue, if it is in your power, or else to close your ears and run away. The universal spirit, the great lord, Purári, the father of the world, the friend of all, he it is whom my besotted father has reviled. Therefore this body of mine, begotten of his seed, I hasten to abandon, and impress on my soul the image of him who bears the moon as his crest and a bull as his device.” As she thus spoke, the flames consumed her body ; a great cry of lamentation went up from the whole assembly.

Dohá 74.

When Sambhu's attendants heard of Sati's death, they began to destroy all the sacrificial offerings ; but the great saint Bhrigu, seeing the destruction, came and saved them.

Chaupái 65.

When Sambhu got the news he sent Bírbbhadra in his

wrath, who went and scattered the sacrifice and requited all the gods as they deserved. Daksha's act is famous throughout the world as an example of hostility to Sambhu ; and as the story is so well known. I have told it in brief. Sati at her death asked this boon of Hari, that in every successive birth she might show her love to Siva. On this account she was born in the form of Párvati, as the daughter of King Himálaya. From the time that she entered the house of the monarch of mountains, it was pervaded by fortune and prosperity, and hermits made their homes all about it, in fit places assigned them by the king.

Dohá 75.

Strange trees of many kinds, with never-failing flowers and fruits, appeared on the beautiful hills, and mines of jewels discovered themselves.

Chaupái 66.

All the rivers flowed with the purest water ; birds, deer and bees were all equally joyous ; every animal forgot its instinctive antipathies and dwelt lovingly on the mountain, which was as glorified by Girija's coming as a man is glorified by the spirit of faith. Every day was some new delight in the king's palace, and Bráhma and all the gods vied in singing its praises. On hearing the news, Nárad went to visit the mountain king, who received him with high honour and bathed his feet and led him to a throne. The queen too bowed her head before him and sprinkled the whole house with the water sanctified by his use. Then the king told all his good fortune and summoned his daughter also to the presence and said ;—

Dohá 76.

“Thou who knowest all time, past, present, of or future, and who hast traversed, the whole universe tell me, best of saints, after well considering the matter, what there is good and what bad about my daughter.”

Chaupái 67.

The saint replied with a smile, in soft but profound words,—“Your daughter is a mine of perfection, beautiful, amiable and intelligent, whether she be called Umá, or Ambiká, or Bhaváni ; a maiden with every quality that endears a wife to a husband. Firm as a rock her good fortune, and in her her parents are blessed ; she shall be worshipped throughout the whole world, and in her service shall be fruition of every desire. Through her name woman shall be enabled to walk the path of wifely duty, though it be like the edge of a sword. Such, O king, are thy daughter's merits ; but you have now to hear two or three drawbacks. A person who has neither beauty nor dignity, without father or mother, an ascetic with no thought for any one,

Dohi 77.

A mendicant recluse with matted hair, a celibate with naked body and hideous accoutrements—such a one shall be her lord, as I read by the lines on her palm.”

Chaupái 68.

When the father and mother heard the saint's words, and knew they must be true, they became sad ; but Umá rejoiced ; nor did Nárad even understand, for all seemed affected alike, though the cause was different.¹ All Girijá's attendants, and she herself and her father and her mother Maina, were trembling and had their eyes full of tears ; but Umá cherished the saint's words in her heart, saying,—‘ They cannot be false : ’ and her love for Siva's lotus feet revived ; though the doubt remained, How difficult to find him ! But as it was no fitting time for a disclosure, she suppressed her emotion and went back to the bosom of her playmates. They and the parents were distressed by the thought of the saint's infallible utterance, and the king, with an effort, cried aloud,—“O sir, tell me what remedy to devise.”

¹ That is to say, they all shed tears, but the parents wept for sorrow and Umá for joy.

Dohá 78.

Said the saint,—“Hear, O Himavant, what fate has written on the forehead, nor god nor demon, man, serpent, nor saint, is able to efface.

Chaupái 69.

Yet one mode of escape I will tell you, which by the help of heaven may avail. Umá's bridegroom will infallibly be such a one as I have described to you ; but all the bad points that I have enumerated I find to exist in Siva. If a marriage with him can be brought about, every one will account his vices as virtues. Though Hari takes a serpent for his couch, the wise hold it no fault in him; though fire and the sun devour anything they come across, no one therefore calls them blind; though its stream flows in one place pure and in another sullied, no one would call the Ganges impure. The powerful my friend, are always faultless, like the sun, fire, or the Ganges.

Dohá 79.

The fool who in the pride of knowledge presumes to copy them, saying ‘it is the same for a man as for a god,’ shall be cast into hell for as long as the world lasts.¹

Chaupái 70.

Though they know that wine is made with Ganges water, yet saints will never taste it ; but the Ganges itself, wherever found, is always pure ; and herein is seen the difference

¹ A similar doctrine is inculcated in the Xth Book of the Bhágavata Purána : “The transgression of virtue and the daring acts which are witnessed in superior beings must not be charged as faults against those glorious persons. Let no one but a superior being ever even in thought practise the same. Seeing, then, that the saints are uncontrolled and act as they please how can there be any restraint upon the Supreme, when he has voluntarily assumed a body.” Granted those reasonable limitations which the Hindu mind with its tendency to exaggeration, was unfortunately so prone to neglect the sentiment is essentially true and is recommended by Catholic theologians. Thus Cardinal Newman writes,—“It never surprises me to read anything unusual in the devotions of a saint. Such men are on a level very different from our own, and we cannot understand them. I hold this to be an important canon in the lives of the saints, according to the words of the apostle,—‘The spiritual man judges all things, and he himself is judged of no one.’ But we may refrain from judging, without proceeding to imitate. The saints are beyond us, and we must use them as patterns not as copies.

between mastery and subjection.¹ The lord Samblu is all-powerful and an alliance with him is in every way auspicious. But it is hard to propitiate him; yet if penance is undergone, he is quickly satisfied. If, then, your daughter will practise penance, Tripurári will be able to erase the lines of fate; and though there may be many bridegrooms in the world, the only one for her is Siva, and none else. He answers prayer, relieves the distress of the faithful, is full of compassion and a delight to his servants; unless he is propitiated, no one will attain his heart's desire, though he practise infinite penance and austerity."

Dohá 80.

So saying, and with his thoughts fixed on Hari, Nárad gave his blessing to the king and added,—“Now fear not, all will turn out well.”

Chaupáí 71.

Having thus spoken, the saint returned to Bráhma's court. Hear now the end of the story how it came about. Maina finding her husband alone said to him,—“My lord, I do not understand the saint's meaning. If the bridegroom and his position and family are unobjectionable and such as befit your daughter, then conclude the marriage; but if not, let her remain a maiden: for, my lord, Umá is as dear to me as life. If she does not get a husband worthy of her, every one will say the mountain-king is himself a mere block. Remember this, and so marry her that there may be no heart-burning hereafter.” With these words she laid her head at his feet. The king affectionately replied,—“Sooner shall fire break out in the moon than Nárad's word be gainsaid.

Dohá 81.

Put away all anxiety, my dear, and fix your thoughts on the good God who has created Párvati and who will protect her.

¹ The meaning is, wine, though made of Ganges water, is still impure but the Ganges itself is always pure, even though wine may have been poured into it.

Chaupái 72.

Now, if you have any love for your child, go and thus admonish her,—‘Penance is the means of approach to Siva, and there is no other way of escaping sorrow. Nárad’s words are pregnant and full of meaning: Mahádeva is in fact beautiful and accomplished; recognize this truth and doubt not; he is in every way irreproachable.’” When she heard her husband’s words she was glad of heart and at once rose and went where Umá was. On seeing the girl her eyes filled with tears, and she affectionately took her in her lap and again and again pressed her to her bosom; but could not say a word for the choking in her throat. Then the mother of the universe, the all-wise Bhaváni, her mother’s delight, said softly :—

Dohá 82.

“Listen, mother, to the vision I am about to tell you; a fair and lovely Bráhmán prince has thus instructed me :—

Chaupái 73.

Go, mountain-maid, and practise penance, reflecting that Nárad’s words are infallibly true. Your parents, too, are pleased with the idea, for penance is full of peace and puts an end to pain and sin. By the virtue of penance the Creator made the world; by the virtue of penance Vishnu redeems the world; by virtue of penance Sambhu destroys it. It is by the virtue of penance that the Great Serpent supports the burden of the earth, and in short the whole creation, Bhaváni, depends upon penance; do you then practise it.” On hearing these words her mother was astounded, and sent for the king and declared to him the vision. Then, after consoling her parents in every possible way, Umá in gladness of heart commenced her penance; while they and all their loving dependants grew sad of face, nor could speak a word.

Dohá 83.

Then came Vedasiras¹ and instructed them all; and when they had heard of Párvati’s glory they were comforted.

¹ Vedasiras, a son of Mírkandeya and Murchanya was, by his wife Pívari, the Progenitor of the Bhárgava Bráhmans.

Chaupái 74.

But Umá, cherishing in her heart the feet of her dear lord, went into the forest and began her penance. Though her delicate frame was little fit for such austerities, she abandoned all food and became absorbed in prayer, her devotion so growing day by day that all bodily wants were forgotten, and her soul was wholly given to penance. For a thousand years she ate only roots and fruits; for a hundred years she lived on vegetables; for some days her only sustenance was water and air, and on some she maintained a yet more absolute fast. For three thousand years she ate only dry leaves of the *bel* tree that had fallen to the ground, and at last abstained even from dry leaves, whence she acquired the name of *aparna* ('the leafless'). At the sight of her emaciated frame, Bráhma's deep voice resounded through the heavens,—

Dohá 84.

"Hear, daughter of the mountain-king! your desire is accomplished; cease all these intolerable afflictions: Tripurári will soon be yours.

Chaupái. 75.

Though there have been many saints, both resolute and wise, not one, Bhaváni, has performed such penance as this: submit now to my commands, knowing them to be ever true and ever good. When your father comes to call you, cease to resist and go home with him; and when the seven sages meet you, know this to be the test of the heavenly prediction." When she heard Bráhma's voice thus speaking from on high, Ġirijá thrilled with delight. Now with her we have done for a time, while we turn to Sambhu. From the day when Sati's spirit left the body he became a rigid ascetic, ever telling his beads in Ráma's name, and attending the public recitations in his honour:

Dohá 85.

Even he, Siva, the pure intelligence, the abode of bliss,

1 The *bel* tree (*Ægle Marmelos*) is specially sacred to Siva.

exempt from lust, frenzy and delusion, wanders about on earth with his heart fixed on Hari, the joy of the whole world ;

Chaupái 76.

Now instructing saints in wisdom, now expounding Ráma's praises, and though himself the all-wise and passionless lord god, yet saddened by the sadness of a bereaved disciple. In this way many ages passed, while his love for Ráma daily increased. Then the generous and merciful god, full of grace and benignity, seeing his steadfastness and affection, and the unchangeable stamp of devotion on his soul, became manifest in all his glory and lauded him highly, for none other had ever accomplished such a vow. In diverse ways he instructed him, telling him of Párvati's birth and of her virtuous deeds, all at full length, in his infinite compassion.

Dohá 86.

"Now, Siva, if you have any love for me, listen to my request : go and marry the mountain-maid and do as I ask you."

Chaupái 77.

Said Siva,—“Though it is not what I approve, yet when a master speaks he must not be gainsaid. I must needs bow to your order, for obedience is the highest duty. If a man would prosper, he must do, without thinking, as he is told by his parents, or his confessor, or his superior ; you are in every way my benefactor, and I bow to your commands.” The lord was pleased when he heard Sankara's reply so full of faith, knowledge, and religious feeling, and said,—“Hara, your vow has been kept ; attend now to what I have told you.” So saying he vanished, but the vision remained impressed in Sankara's soul. Then came the seven Rishis to visit him, and he addressed them thus in pleasant wise :—

Dohá 87.

“Go to Párvati and make trial of her love, and then send her father to fetch her home and remove all his doubts.”

Chandī 78.

When the Rishis saw Gauri, she seemed to them like Penance personified, and they cried—"Hear, O daughter of the mountain! Why practise such grievous self-mortification? Whom do you worship and what do you desire? Tell us the whole secret truly." When Bhavāni heard their speech, she replied in strangely moving terms:—"I greatly shrink from telling my secret, for you will smile at my folly when you hear it; but my soul is obstinately set and refuses to hear instruction, though I am like one building a house upon the water, or as one who would fly without wings, relying only on the truth of Nārada's prophecy. See, O saints, the extent of my madness. I long for the unchangeable Sankara as my husband."

Doh: 88.

The Rishis smiled on hearing her speech, and said:—"You are a true daughter of the parent rock; but tell me who has ever listened to Nārada's advice and had a home?"

Chandī 79.

"Did he not advise Daksha's sons, and they never saw their father's house again? It was he, too, who ruined Chitraketu's family, and also Hiranya-kasipu's.¹ Whoever listens

¹ It was by Nārada's advice that the sons of Daksha were dissuaded from multiplying their race and scattered themselves all over the world in the hope of acquiring knowledge. Not one of them ever returned, and the unhappy father, thus deserted by all his children, denounced as a curse upon Nārada that he, too, should always be a homeless wanderer on the face of the earth.

King Chitraketu was childless, though he had a thousand wives. At last, by the blessing of a saint, one of them bore him a son; but when it was a year old they all conspired together and poisoned it. The king was weeping sorely with the dead child in his arms, when Nārada came and after much persuasion consented to restore it to life. It at once sat up and began to speak, saying that in a former state of existence it had been a king, who had retired from the world into a hermitage. There one day a woman in charity gave him a cake of fuel, which he put on the fire without perceiving that there were in it a thousand little ants. These innocent creatures all perished in the flames, but were born again in a more exalted position as Chitraketu's wives; while the woman who gave the fuel, and the hermit who used it, became the mother and the child, whom inexorable fate had thus punished for their former sinful inadvertence. After finishing this explanation the child again fell back dead, and Chitraketu, giving up all hope of an heir, abandoned the throne and began a course of penance.

to Nárada's advice, be it man or woman, is certain to become a homeless beggar. Seemingly pious, but deceitful at heart, he would make every one like himself. And now you are led away by his words, and are longing to marry a very outcast, a worthless, shameless, tattered wretch, with a necklace of serpents and skulls, and without either family or house or even clothes. Tell me now—what pleasure is to be had from such a bridegroom as this? Better forget the ravings of the impostor. For he married Sati only because other people suggested it, and soon abandoned her and left her to die.

Dohá 89.

And now he never gives her a thought, but goes about a begging, and eats and sleeps at his ease. What respectable woman could ever stay with such a confirmed solitary?

Chaupái 80.

To-day if you will hear my words, I have thought of an excellent bridegroom for you, so beautiful and honourable, so pleasant and amiable, that even the Veda hymns his praise—the faultless and all-perfect lord of Lakshmi, who reigns at Vaikuntha. He is the husband that I will bring you." On hearing this Bhaváni smiled and replied,—“You said true that I inherit a rock-nature, and would sooner die than yield. Gold, again, is another product of the rock that cannot be changed by any amount of burning. Nor will I change my faith in Nárada's word; whether my house be full or desolate, I fear not: whoever doubts the word of his spiritual adviser must never dream of obtaining either happiness or riches.

Dohá 90.

Mahádeva is full of faults, while Vishnu is all-perfect: but the heart concerns itself only about the object it happens to fancy.

When Kayádhru, the wife of the king, heard of this, she brought forth, she received even to the ears of the child in her womb, that he was born he devoted himself to the service of Vishnu, and thus provoked his impious father to the acts of persecution which resulted in his own destruction and the extinction of his royal line.

Chaupái 81.

If, reverend sirs, I had met you sooner, I would have submitted to your advice ; but now that I have given my life for Sambhu, it is too late to weigh his merits and defects. If you are firmly resolved upon making a match, you need not stand idle ; the world is full of young men and maidens ; but as for me, though I hold out for a million lives, I will either wed Sambhu or remain a virgin. I will not forget Nárada's admonition, even though Mahádeva himself and again told me to do so. I, who am styled the mother of the world, fall at your feet and bid you return home ; your time is lost." When the sages beheld her devotion, they cried—"Glory glory, glory to the great mother Bhaváni.

Dohá 91.

United as Mayá to the god Siva, the parents of the universe !" then bowing the head at her feet and thrilling with rapture they left,

Chaupái 82.

And sent King Himavant, and with many entreaties brought Girijá back. When they returned to Siva and told him Uma's whole history, he was delighted to hear of her affection, and they went gladly home. Then the all-wise Sambhu, firmly directing his intention, began a meditation on Ráma. Now at that time was a demon Táraka, of gigantic strength of arm and high renown, who had subdued the sovereigns of every region and robbed the gods of all their happiness. Knowing neither age nor death, he was invincible ; and the powers of heaven were vanquished in innumerable battles. At last they all went and cried to the Creator, and he seeing them so dismayed,

Dohá 92.

Re-assured them, saying,—“the demon shall die when a son is born of the seed of Sambhu, who shall conquer him in fight.

Chaupái 83.

Having heard what I say, devise a plan by which such a lord may arise and assist you. After Sati quitted the body at Daksha's sacrifice, she was born again as the daughter of the Himálaya, and has been practicing penance in the hope of obtaining Sambhu to husband. He, on the other hand, has left all and sits absorbed in contemplation. Though it will be a difficult business, yet list to what I propose. Send Káma, the god of love, to Siva to agitate his soul, and then I will approach with bowed head and arrange the marriage, and in this way your object will be attained." All exclaimed that the plan was good, and heartily applauded it. Then came the god with the five arrows and the fish-standard ;

Dohá 93.

And they told him their distress. He heard, and after reflecting a little replied with a smile,—“ Sambhu's displeasure will work me no good,

Chaupái 84.

Yet I will do you this service. The scriptures say charity is the highest of virtues, and one who gives his life for another is ever the praise of the saints." So saying he bowed, and took his leave, he and his attendant,¹ with his bow of flowers in his hand. And as he went he thought within himself,—‘Siva's displeasure will surely be my death.’ Therefore he hastened to exhibit his power, and for a time reduced to subjection the whole world. If Love is provoked, the stepping-stones of the law are swept away in a moment ; religious vows and obligations, self-control, ceremonial observances, knowledge and philosophy, virtuous practices, prayer, penance, self-mortification, the whole spiritual army, is panic-stricken and put to flight.

Chhand 3.

Virtue's grand force is routed in panic and dismay,
And in dark nooks of holy books her champions skulk away.
Great god of fate ! in this dread state what saving power is nigh ?
‘Gainst man's one heart Love's fivefold dart wins easy victory.

¹ Kámadeva's attendant is Riturája, or Basanta, the spring season.

Dohá 94.

Every creature in the world, animate or inanimate, male or female, forgot natural restraint and became subject to love.

Chaupái 85.

In every heart was a craving for love: the tree bent its boughs to kiss the creeper; the overflowing river ran into the arms of ocean; lakes and ponds effected a meeting. And when such was the case with inanimate creation, what need to speak of man? Beasts on land and birds in the air, under the influence of love, were unmindful of time and season; all were agitated and blind with desire, and the swan regarded neither night nor day.¹ Gods, demons, men, *kinnaras*, serpents, ghosts, witches, goblins and imps were all at once enslaved by love; even saints and hermits, sages and ascetics, became again sensual under his influence.

Chhand 4.

When saints and hermits own his sway, why speak of serf and thrall,
God's whole creation, recreant grown, swore love was all in all;
Each jocund dame, each amorous swain, found heaven in love's embrace:
Two hours sped past, love still stood fast and reigned in Bráhma's place.

Sorathá 8.

None is so bold but love steals his heart, and only they whom Ráma protects can then escape.

Chaupái 86.

For two hours this triumph lasted, till Kámadeva drew nigh to Sambhu. On seeing him Love trembled, and the whole world returned to itself. Every living creature at once grew calm, as when a drunkard recovers from his drunkenness. When Love looked at Siva, the invincible and unapproachable god, he feared; then returned shame too strong for words and, resolved upon death, he formed his plan of attack. Forthwith lusty Spring stepped forth, and every tree broke into blossom; wood and grove, lake and pond, every quarter of the heaven,

¹ The male and female *chakwa* (swan, or rather Bráhmani duck) are doomed for ever to nocturnal separation, and are said to pass the night on the opposite banks of a river, vainly calling to each other to cross. During Love's brief triumph the curse was for once removed.

gladdened and overflowed as it were with love, and even the deadest soul quickened at the sight.

Chhand 5.

At love's touch the dead were quickened, blossomed all the wood so dark,
While a breeze soft, cool and fragrant, fanned the love-enkindled spark,
Laughs the lake with many a lotus, hum the bees with drowsy sound,
Swans and parrots chatter gaily, gladly dance the nymphs around.

Dohá 95.

Though he tried every trick and manifold device, yet he
and his army were defeated; Siva's unbroken trance still
continued, and Love grew furious.

Chaupáí 87.

Seeing a mango tree with spreading boughs, he in his
folly climbed up into it; then fitted a shaft to his flowery bow,
and in his great passion taking aim and drawing the string
home to the ear, he let fly and lodged the five arrows in his
breast. Then the trance was broken and Sambhu awoke. In
the lord's soul was great agitation; he opened his eyes, and
looking all round saw Kámadeva in the mango tree. At his
wrath the three worlds trembled. Then Siva unclosed his
third eye, and by its flash Kámadeva was reduced to ashes. A
confused cry went up through the universe from the gods in
their dismay, from the demons in exultation; the rich
were sad when they remembered love's delights, while saints
and hermits felt relieved of a thorn.¹

Chhand 6.

The saints were freed from torment: but Rati swooned for woe,
And in sad guise with weeping eyes at Siva's throne fell low,
Sore wailing and lamenting her dear lord's hapless fate:
Till quick to pardon spoke the god in words compassionate:

Dohá 96.

"Henceforth, Rati, your husband's name shall be called
Anang (the bodiless), and thus etherealized he shall pervade
all things. But hear how you will again find him hereafter.

¹ With this whole narrative compare that in the *Kumāra Sambhava* of Kálidāsa.

Chaupái 88.

When Krishna becomes incarnate in the family of Jadu to relieve the world of its burdens, your husband shall be born again as his son (Pradyumna) this my word shall not fail." On hearing this prophecy of Sankara's, Rati retired. I now turn to another part of my story. When Bráhma and the other gods heard these tidings they first went to Vaikuntha, and thence, with Vishnu, Bráhma and all the rest, into the presence of the merciful Siva, and each of them separately sang his praises. Then the gracious power whose crest is the moon and whose standard a bull, said,—“Tell me, ye immortals, why ye have come.” Said Bráhma,—“My lord, you can read our hearts, but as ordered I speak.

Dohá 97.

In the mind of all the gods is one idea. Sankara is love-smitten, and we would fain with our own eyes see his marriage.

Chaupái 89.

O destroyer of the pride of love, let us feast our eyes on this glad event. In granting a husband to Rati after Káma-deva had been consumed you have done well, O sea of compassion, in punishment remembering mercy; the great have ever an easy temper. Accept now the interminable penance that Párvati has endured.” On hearing Bráhma's speech and perceiving its purport, he exclaimed joyfully, “So be it!” Then the gods sounded their kettledrums and rained down flowers, and cried,—“Victory, victory to the King of heaven!” Then, perceiving it was the proper time, the seven sages came and were despatched by Bráhma to the Himálaya where first they sought Bhaváni and addressed her in mild but deceptive terms:—

Dohá 98.

“You would not listen to us, but rather took Nárada's advice; now again is your vow proved vain, for the god of love has been consumed by Mahádeva.”

Chaupái 90.

Bhaváni replied with a smile,—“ O wisest of sages, you have said well. Your words—‘Love has been consumed by Mahádeva’—imply a belief that aforesaid Sambhu was liable to change. But I know him to be from everlasting an ascetic, faultless, loveless, passionless : and if, knowing him to be such as he is, I have served him devotedly in heart, word and deed, so gracious a lord (he assured, O sages) will bring my vow to accomplishment. Your saying that Hara has destroyed Love betrays great want of judgment. Fire, my friend, has an unalterable nature, and ice cannot exist near it ; brought near it must inevitably perish ; and so must Love in the presence of Mahádeva.”¹

Dohá 99.

On hearing this speech and seeing her love and confidence the sages were delighted and bowed the head before her, and went to King Himáchal,

Chaupái 91.

And told him the whole history. When he heard of Love’s annihilation he was much distressed, but was again comforted when told of Rati’s promised husband. After pondering on the majesty of Sambhu, he reverently summoned the wise men, and at once had the day fixed according to Vedic prescription selecting an auspicious date, and planet and hour. Then he gave the letter to the seven sages, humbly falling at their feet, and they took it to Bráhma, who could not contain himself for joy on reading it, but at once proclaimed it aloud. The whole company of heaven was delighted : there was music and a shower of flowers, and in every quarter festive preparations were commenced.

Dohá 100.

All the gods began adorning the different vehicles on

¹ The line thus translated stands in the original *Asi Munmatha Mahesa ho nai*. There is an entirely different reading in some copies *jimi Sampáthi nij pachoh ganwáti*, ‘like as Sampáthi lost his wings ;’ Sampáthi was the brother of Jatáyú, and in his pride flew so high into the heaven that his wings were consumed by the heat of the sun. See Book IV, *dohá 27*.”

which they ride abroad, the Muses sung for joy, and all was bliss and happiness.

Chaupái 92.

Siva's attendants began to dress their lord, arranging his serpent-crest and crown of matted locks ; with snakes for his earrings and bracelets of snakes for his wrists ; his body smeared with ashes, and a lion's skin about his loins : the moon on his brow, the lovely Ganges on the crown of his head, his eyes three in number, and a serpent for his Bráhmanical cord ; his throat black with poison ; a wreath of dead men's skulls about his breast. In such ghastly attire was arrayed the great god Siva. With trident in hand he advanced riding on a bull, while the drums beat and instruments of music were played. The female divinities all smiled to see him, and said, "The world has no bride worthy of such a lover." Vishnu and Bráhma and all the company of heaven followed in the procession, each on his own carriage. 'The gods make a fine sight, but still the procession is not worthy of the bridegroom.'

Dohá 101.

So cried Vishnu with a smile and then commanded all the heavenly warders—"March separately, each one with his own retinue,

Chaupái 93.

Otherwise on going into a strange city they will laugh and say what a sorry procession for such a bridegroom." The gods smiled to hear this speech, and marched separately, each at the head of his own followers. Mahádeva smiled too, not understanding Hari's joke, but taking it as a most friendly suggestion, and sent Bhringi to bring all his attendants. On receiving Siva's order they all came and bowed the head at his lotus feet. Then Siva laughed to see the host in their motley attire, riding every kind of vehicle ; some with monstrous heads, some with no head at all ; some with many hands and feet, and some with none ; some with great eyes, some with no eyes ; some very stout, some very slim.

Chhand 7.

All, stout or slim, or foul or trim, in gruesome panoply,
 With skulls for wine-cups filled with blood, from which they quaffed with glee;
 With head of dog, or ass, or hog, a host no tongue can tell,
 Ghosts, goblins, witches, every kind of denizen of hell.

Sorathá 9.

All the demons went singing and dancing with wonderful contortions, such as never were seen, and uttering all sorts of strange cries.

Chaupái 94.

Like bridegroom, like procession—an extraordinary sight as it went along the road. There King Himáchal erected a canopy more splendid than words can tell; and every hill in the world, small and great, more than man can count, and every wood and sea, river, stream and lake, all were invited to attend; and assuming forms of exquisite beauty, with all their retinue, male and female, they flocked to the palace singing songs of gladness. First of all the king had built a number of guest-houses, and so tastefully arranged them, that, after a glance at the beauty of the city, the Creator of the world seemed a contemptible architect.

Chhand 8.

Little seemed the world's Creator, and his skill of nothing worth:
 Lake and fountain, grove and garden, shone more fair than aught on earth.
 Wreaths and arches, flags and banners, made each house a goodly show;
 Gallant youth and lovely maidens set a saint's heart all aglow.

Dohá 102.

The city in which the great mother had taken birth surpassed description; joy, prosperity and abundance were ever on the increase.

Chaupái 95.

When it was known that the marriage procession was close at hand, the stir in the city and the brilliancy of the decorations grew more and more. With numerous carriages and all due equipment the heralds started for the formal reception. When they saw the army of gods they were glad of heart, and

yet more so when they beheld Hari. But when they perceived Siva's familiars, every beast they rode started back in affright. Grown men summoned up courage to stand, but the children all ran for their lives straight back home, and when their parents questioned them could only reply trembling all over,—"What can we say? it is beyond telling; it is no marriage procession, but the army of Death; the bridegroom, a maniac, mounted on a bull; with snakes and skulls and ashes to adorn him.

Chhand 9.

Skulls and snakes and streaks of ashes, matted locks and body bare,
Witches, imps, and frightful goblins, and appalling ghosts are there.
Happy man who sees such horrors nor dies at once of fright!"
So from house to house they babbled on Uma's wedding night.

Dohá 103.

The fathers and mothers smiled, for they recognized Siva's familiars, and reassured the children in every possible way, saying,—“Do not be afraid; there is no cause for fear.”

Chaupái 96.

The heralds brought in the procession and assigned them all pleasant quarters. And Maina, having prepared an elegant sacrificial lamp, and lustrous water in a golden bowl, proceeded gladly to move it round and round over Siva's head while her attendants sang festive songs. When they saw his terrible attire, the women feared greatly and ran inside the house all of a tremble. Mahádeva advanced to the guest-room and Maina, sorely grieved at heart, called her daughter, and in the most loving manner took her in her lap, while her lotus eyes overflowed with tears,—“To think that the Creator should have made you so beautiful, and then give you such a raving fool for a bridegroom!

Chhand 10.

How can God send such a raving groom for such a lovely bride?
What a thorn-bush is our wishing tree, the fruit for which we cried!
From mountain-top, in sea or fire, I'll cast me down with thee;
Welcome disgrace, so they be gone; this wedding ne'er shall be.”

Dohá 104.

All the ladies were distressed when they saw the queen so sad, who in her deep affection for her daughter began to weep and make great lamentation,—

Chandí 97.

“What harm had I done to Nárada that he should make my home desolate and give Umá such advice, to undergo penance for the sake of a mad bridegroom? In good sooth he is fancy free and passionless, an ascetic who wants neither money, nor house, nor wife, and therefore in destroying another's home he has neither shame nor compunction; for what does a barren woman know of the pangs of childbirth?” When Bhaváni saw her mother's distress, she answered thus placidly and discreetly,—“Be not troubled, my mother, with these thoughts, for God's plans are unalterable. If fate decrees me a mad husband, then why should any one be blamed? Can you blot out the hand writing of the Creator? then refrain from profitless reproaches.

Chhand 11.

Cease from profitless reproaches, nor in vain bemoan my fate,
I must go where'er my destined joys and sorrows for me wait.”
Hearing Umá's pious answer, all her ladies felt surprise.
Much they talked of God's injustice, while the tears bedewed their eyes.

Dohá 105.

At that time came Nárada, and with him the sages (for they had heard the news), and at once betook themselves to the king's palace.

Chaupái 98.

Then Nárada instructed them all, and recited in full the past history, saying,—“Hear, O Maina! my words are true; your daughter is Bhaváni, the mother of the world, the everlasting female energy; without birth or beginning; Sambhu's inseparable half; the creator, supporter, and destroyer of the universe; who at will assumes the semblance of human form. First she was born in Daksha's house, Sati by name, of ex-

cellent beauty. Then as Sati she married Sankara, and her story is famous throughout the world, how once with Siva, she met the sun of Raghu's lotus line (*i. e.*, Ráma), and in her infatuation was not obedient to Siva, but was beguiled into assuming the form of Síta.

Chhand 12.

For the crime of this assumption she was widowed many a day,
Till in the fire before her sire her sins were burnt away.
Now born your daughter, for her lord in penitence she stayed;
And Siva aye shall be her lord; know this, nor be dismayed."

Dohá 106.

On hearing Nárada's explanation the sadness of all was dispersed, and in a moment his words were spread from house to house throughout the city.

Chaupáí 99.

Then Maina and Himavant were glad and fell again and again at Párvati's feet. All the people of the city, whatever their age, men and women alike, were equally delighted. Songs of joy began to sound in the streets; golden vases were displayed; meats were dressed in various ways according to the rules of gastronomic science. But the banquet table in the palace inhabited by the great mother Bhaváni was altogether beyond description. The marriage guests—Vislmu, Bráhma and all the heavenly orders—were courteously entreated and took their seats line after line. Then the skilful servers began to serve and the women, when they found the gods were sat down, began to jest and banter in pleasant strain.

Chhand 13.

In pleasant strain with dark refrain they hint at love's delight;
Charmed with the song, the gods sit long, nor heed the waning night,
With growing zest each jovial guest prolongs the festive hour:
At last they rise; each bids adieu and seeks his separate bower.

Dohá 107.

Again the sages came and reminded Himavant of the marriage; and he, seeing the time was fit, sent and summoned all the gods,

Chaurai 100.

Whom he courteously addressed, and assigned to each an appropriate seat. An altar was prepared according to Vedic ritual, while the women chanted festal strains; and a divinely beautiful throne was erected, the handi-work of a god, beyond description. Then Siva, after bowing to the Brāhmanas, took his seat, remembering in his heart his own lord, Rāma. Then the sages sent for Umā, who was brought in by her handmaids, richly adorned. All the gods beholding her beauty were enraptured. What poet in the world could describe such loveliness! The divinities who recognized in her the universal mother, the spouse of Mahādeva, adored her in their inmost soul—Bhavāni, the crown of beauty—whose praises would still be beyond me even though I had a myriad tongues.

Chhand 14.

A myriad tongues were all too few to sing her matchless grace :
When gods and muses shrink abashed, for Tulsī's rhyme what place ?
With downcast eyes the glorious dame passed up the hall, and fell,
Bee-like, at Siva's lotus feet, the lord she loved so well.

Dohā 108.

At the injunction of the priests, both Sambhu and Bhavāni paid divine honours to Ganes. And let no one be perplexed on hearing this, but know well that they are gods from everlasting.

Chaurai 101.

The whole marriage ceremony was performed by the priests in accordance with Vedic ritual, and the father, with *kusa* grass in his hand, took the bride and gave her to Siva. When the two had joined hands, all the gods were glad of heart; the chief priests uttered the scriptural formulæ, and the cry went up of "Glory, glory, glory to Sankara!" all kinds of music began to play, and flowers were rained down from heaven. Thus was accomplished the marriage of Hara and Girijā amidst general rejoicing. The dowry given defies description—men-servants and maid-servants, horses, carriages, elephants, cows, raiment, jewellery, things of all sorts, and wagonloads of grain and golden vessels.

Chhand 15.

Thus great and more the dowry's store that King Himāchal brought;
 Yet falling low at Siva's feet he cried that all was nought.
 The gracious lord cheered his sad sire in every way most meet,
 Then Maina came, most loving dame, and clasped his lotus feet :

Dohi 109.

"Umā, my lord, is dear to me as my own soul ; take her
 as one of your servants, and pardon all her offences : this is
 the boon I beg of your favour. "

Chaupai 102.

After Sambhu had in every possible way reassured his
 wife's mother, she bowed herself at his feet and went home,
 there called for Umā, and taking her into her lap gave her
 this excellent instruction,— "Be ever obedient to Sankara to
 say 'My lord and my god' is the sum of all wisely duty." At these
 words her eyes filled with tears, and again and again she pressed
 her daughter to her bosom,— "Why has God created woman
 in the world, seeing that she is always in a state of subjection,
 and never can even dream of happiness?" Though utterly
 distracted by motherly love, she knew it was no time to
 display it, and restrained herself. Running to her again and
 again, and falling on the ground to clasp her feet, in a trans-
 port of affection beyond all words, Bhavāni said adieu to all
 her companions, and then again went and clung to her
 mother's breast.

Chhand 16.

Still clinging to her mother's breast she cheered her weeping train,
 Then with her handmaids sought her spouse, yet oft looked back again.
 'Midst beggars' blessings, richly bought, forth rode the royal pair :
 The glad gods rained down flowers, and sounds of music filled the air.

Dohi 110.

Then went Himavant most lovingly to escort them, till
 with many words of consolation Mahādeva bid him return.

Chaupai 103.

Then he came speedily to the palace, called all the hills
 and lakes, entreated them courteously with words and gifts,

and allowed them to depart. They proceeded each to his own realm, and Sambhu arrived at Kailása. How shall I tell its delights when thus occupied by Sambhu and Bhaváni, the father and mother of the world, and their attendants? They began to indulge in sport and dalliance, and every day was some new pleasure. Thus a length of time was passed and the six-headed child (Kartikeya) was born, who vanquished in battle the demon Táraka. His birth is sung by all the sacred books, and his deeds are known throughout the world.

Chhand 17.

All the world knows the story of the birth and the glory
of Mahádeva's six-headed son;

And this is the cause why so briefly I pause on the
generous deeds he hath done.

Man or maid, who shall tell, or sing true and well, how
Siva took Umá to wife,

Shall be happily wed, and, with blessings bestead, live
at ease all the days of his life.

Dohá 111.

The amorous doings of Girijá and her beloved are an ocean-like depth that not even the Veda can sound; how then can an ignorant clown such as Tulsi Dás succeed in describing them?

Chaupáí 104.

When the sainted Bharadvája had heard all this pleasant and delectable history of Sambhu's doings, he was delighted and longed to hear yet more. With overflowing eyes and every limb thrilling, he was so mastered by love that his tongue could not utter a word. On seeing his condition the great sage was pleased,—“Blessed is thy birth, to whom Gauri's lord is dear as life. He who loves not Siva's lotus feet can never dream of pleasing Ráma: a guileless love for Siva's feet is the surest sign of faith in Ráma. For who is so faithful to Ráma as Siva, who for no fault thus left his wife Sati and made a vow, the pledge of unswerving fidelity?

And whom does Râma hold more dear than Siva?

Dohâ 112.

I have begun by telling you of Siva's deeds, knowing well your secret, that you are a true servant of Râma, without any variableness.

Chaupâi 105.

I understand your character and disposition; listen therefore while I proceed to recount Râma's adventures. I cannot say how glad I am at this meeting with you to-day. Though Râma's deeds are beyond measure, and not a myriad serpent kings could tell them all, yet I repeat the tale as it has been revealed, after fixing my thoughts on the god with bow in hand, who is the lord of the queen of speech. For Sarasvatî is as it were but a puppet, and Râma the manager who plays the hidden strings. When he finds a true believer, he graciously sets her to dance in the courtyard of the poet's fancy. To him, the merciful Raghunâth, I bow before commencing the recital of his glory. Of all mountains the most beautiful was Kailâs, since Siva and Umâ had made it their home :—

Dohâ 113.

Saints, hermits, ascetics, gods, *kinnaras*, sages, and all pious souls came there to dwell and adore Mahâdeva, the root of all good.

Chaupâi 106.

But enemies of Hari and Hara, who had no love for virtue, could never even in a dream find their way to the place. On this mountain was an enormous *bar* tree, which no time nor season could rob of its beauty; ever stirred by soft, cool, fragrant breezes and a shade from the hottest sun; the *Vitap* tree famous in sacred song as Mahâdeva's favourite haunt. Once on a time the lord had gone under it, and in an excess of delight spread with his own hands his tiger-skin on the ground and there sat at ease: his body as fair in hue as the jasmine or the moon, his arms of great length, a her-

mit's cloth wrapt about his loins, his feet like lotus blossoms, and his toe-nails like gleams of light to dispel the darkness of faithful souls; his face more splendid than the moon in autumn: and his decorations, serpents and streaks of ashes.

Dohá 114.

With his twisted coils of hair for a crown; with the Ganges springing from his head; with full-orbed eyes like the lotus, and with the crescent moon on his brow; the dark-throated god shone forth in all his brilliancy.

Chaupái 107.

So sat the enemy of Love, as it were Quietism embodied. Then Párvati, who is the great mother Bhaváni, approached, seeing her time. In recognition of her love he received her most courteously and enthroned her on his left side. Joyously she sat beside him and recalled her former life; and reckoning on his augmented attachment she spoke, being fain to hear the salutary tale,—“O lord of the world, my lord Purári, your greatness is known throughout all three worlds; things moving or motionless, serpents, men and gods, all do homage to your lotus feet.

Dohá 115.

You are the lord of all power and of all knowledge; the centre of art and science; the great storehouse of meditation, of wisdom and of asceticism; and your name is as the tree of life to the afflicted.

Chaupái 108.

If, O blissful being, I have found favour in your sight, and you know me to be your own devoted slave, then, my lord, disperse my ignorance by reciting to me the story of Ráma. How can he who dwells beneath the tree of paradise know aught of sorrow that is born of want? Consider, O moon-crowned god, and relieve my mind of this perplexity. The saints, who preach salvation, declare that Ráma is the uncreated god; Seshnág, Sarasvati, the Veda, the Puránas,

all sing his praises ; you too, night and day, great conqueror of Love, reverently repeat his name. Is this Râma the son of the King of Avadh, or some other uncreated, passionless, invisible Being?

Dohâ 116.

If a king's son, and so distressed by the loss of his wife, then how the Supreme God? When I compare his acts that I see with the eulogies that I hear, my mind is completely distracted.

Chaupâi 109.

Instruct me, my lord, with regard to him who is the passionless, all-pervading, omnipresent god. Be not wroth at my ignorance, but take steps to remove it. In the wood, though I was too awe-stricken to tell you, I beheld the majesty of Râma, yet my mind was so dull that I did not understand, and I reaped a just reward. Again to-day I am in doubt, and with clasped hands I beg of you to compassionate me: be not angry nor say you have been taught already; the past is past; my infatuation is gone, and I have a hearty longing to hear the sacred story of Râma's virtuous deeds. Declare it, O glory of the serpent king, great lord of heaven.

Dohâ 117.

Laying my head in the dust, I worship your feet, and with folded hands entreat you to tell me all Raghubar's excellent glory, as extracted from scripture and philosophy.

Chaupâi 110.

Though a woman is not entitled to initiation, yet I am in a special degree your servant ; further, the saints do not forbid mystic instruction to a woman in great distress, and it is in extreme distress that I call upon you, O heavenly king, for an account of Râma. First weigh well and declare to me the cause why the invisible Brahm assumed a visible body. Then, my lord, tell me of his incarnation and his pretty actions when a child, and how he wedded Jânaki, and for what fault he left his father's kingdom, and what he did when living in the

woods, and how he slew Rávan, and how he amused himself when he recovered the throne: tell me all about him, most amiable Sankara.

Dohá 118.

Then tell me, gracious lord, of his marvellous acts, and how with all his subjects the jewel of Raghu's line proceeded to his own abode.

Chaupái 111.

Next tell me, my lord what it all means; explaining to me in full detail what is the intelligence that so absorbs the wisest saints; what is faith, and wisdom, and supreme knowledge and detachment from the world. Tell me also, O lord of purest understanding, the many other mysteries connected with Ráma; and if there be anything which I have omitted to ask, be kind enough not to suppress it. You, as the Vedas say, are the great teacher of the three worlds; what can other poor creatures know?" When Siva heard Umá's winning and guileless speech he was glad; the whole of Ráma's acts thronged in upon his soul, his eyes were bedewed with tears and his very limbs thrilled with rapture; for the vision of Ráma filled his heart, and his ecstatic joy was beyond measure.

Dohá 119.

For a brief space Mahádeva was lost in contemplation; then recovered himself and began with great joy to tell the tale of Ráma.

Chaupái 112.

"Not to distinguish between the false and the true is like mistaking a rope for a snake; while as a dream vanishes away on awakening, so is it with those who look well and make sure. I reverence the child Ráma, most easy of access to all who repeat his name. Come to me, O home of bliss and bane of woe, as when thou usedst to sport in Dasarath's courtyard." After thus paying homage to Ráma, Tripurári began his mellifluous recital,—“All blessings on thee, O daughter of the mountain-king, there is no such benefactor as thou art.

Thou hast asked for Ráma's history as potent as the Ganges to sanctify the world ; and it is on the world's account that thou hast asked, being thyself full of love for Ráma's feet.

Dohá 120.

By the blessing of Ráma, O Párvati, not even in sleep can doubt, error, delusion, or distress enter into your mind ; this I know well :

Chaupái 113.

But you have so ordered your certainty as to benefit all who speak or hear. For the ears that hear not Ráma's name are mere snake-holes ; the eyes that have not seen his true vision are like the false eyes in a peacock's tail ; the heads that have not bowed at the feet of Hari's priest are of no more worth than bitter pumpkins. They whose heart is not inspired with faith in Hari are mere animated corpses ; those who sing not his praises are like croaking frogs ; and hard and impenetrable as a thunderbolt is their breast who hear his deeds and take no delight in them. Listen O Girija, to the deeds of Ráma, which are to gods a delight and to demons a delusion.

Dohá 121.

Who is the good man that will not listen to the story of Ráma, which is like the heavenly cow, that fulfils every desire of the gods who tend it.

Chaupái 114.

The story of Ráma is like a fair pair of cymbals to frighten away the birds of doubt, or like an axe at the root of the tree of sin ; listen reverently, O daughter of the mountain-king. How sweet is the name of Ráma, and his ways and his deeds ; his lives and his actions are declared by the scriptures to be beyond number. And as there is no end to Ráma, so the legends about him and his glory are endless : yet seeing the greatness of your love, I will attempt to tell them to the best of my ability and as the scriptures have revealed. Your inquiries, Umá, are most becoming and profit-

able, such as the saints approve, and I too am pleased to hear: but there was one thing I did not like, though you spoke under the influence of a delusion ; for you said,—‘Is there some other Râma whom the Vedas sing and whom sages love to contemplate?’

Dohâ 122.

This is what is said by the vile wretches whom the demon of delusion has in his clutch ; heretics, who are the enemies of Hari and know no difference between truth and falsehood.

Chaupâi 115.

Ignorant, unlearned and blind reprobates ; the mirror of whose mind is clouded by a film of sensuality ; lustfull, treacherous and desperately perverse, who have never even in a dream attained to a vision of true faith. They utter doctrines repugnant to the Veda, with no understanding of loss or gain ; their glass is dim, their eyes are nought ; how then can such hapless wights see the beauty of Râma? Unable to distinguish between the material and immaterial, they jabber many lying words, and under Hari's delusive influence go utterly astray in the world ; for whom no words are too strong. Windy, devilish, drunken, they can utter nothing to the purpose, and are so intoxicated with a strong delusion that no one should give ear to their ravings.

Sorathâ 10.

Being thus assured in your heart, discard all doubt and fall in adoration at Râma's feet. Listen, O daughter of the mountain-king, and the sun of my words shall disperse all the mists from your soul.

Chaupâi 116.

There is no difference between the material and the immaterial ; so declare saints and sages, the Veda and the Purânas. The formless, invisible and uncreated Immaterial out of love for the faithful, becomes materialized. How can this be? In the same way as water is crystallized into ice.

But how can He be subject to sensual delusion whose very name is like the sun to disperse the darkness of error? In Râma, who is the Supreme Being and the sun of the world, the night of delusion can have no part whatever; and in the Lord, who is himself true light, there can be no dawn of understanding; neither joy nor sorrow, knowledge nor ignorance; neither personal piety nor the sins of vanity and pride: but Râma is the omnipresent God, the blissful Lord of all, the ancient of days;

Dohâ 123.

The Great Spirit, the glorious fount of light; the Revealed, the Incomprehensible, the jewel of the family of Raghu, my own lord:" and so saying Siva bowed the head.

Chaupâi 117.

"Fools do not perceive their own error, but senselessly attribute delusion to the lord; like simple folk, who, seeing a clouded sky, say that the sun itself is dim, or who gaze at the moon through their fingers and fancy they see it doubled. O Umâ, delusion affects Râma in the same way as smoke, or a cloud, or dust affects the brightness of the heavens. The five objects of sense, the organs of sense, the gods of sense, as well as the soul, are all in their degree possessed of intelligence;¹ but the great enlightener of them all is the eternal Râma, the lord of Avadh. Whatever in the world is susceptible of enlightenment Râma enlightens; every delusion is subject to him: in him centre all knowledge and virtue; and by his truth the dulness of material creation shines bright as the Ideal, the senses contributing to the deception.

Dohâ 124.

Though false as the gleam of a polished shell, or as a mirage caused by the sun's rays, yet no one at any time, past, present or future, can rid himself of the delusion.

Chaupâi 118.

And such is the world in its connection with Hari: yet

¹ Even inanimate nature has an unconscious intelligence; reason, order and activity pervade the material universe, the mineral as well as the animal and vegetable kingdoms. — *Idem*.

though unreal it can cause pain ; in the same way as a man who dreams that his head is cut off, is in pain till he awakes. None can declare his beginning or his end, though holy scripture has hymned him as best it could. He moves without feet,¹ he hears without ears, and works in manifold ways, yet without hands. Without a mouth he enjoys all tastes, and without a voice is the aptest of speakers; he can see without eyes, touch without limbs, and without a nose catch every scent. His actions are thus in every way supernatural, and his greatness is utterly beyond description.

Dohá 125.

He whom Scripture and Philosophy have thus sung, and whom the saints love to contemplate ; even the Lord God ; he is the son of Dasarath, the beneficent King of Kosala.

Chaupái. 119.

By the power of his name I exalt to the regions of the blest any creature whom I see dying at Kási ; he is the sovereign of all creation, animate and inanimate, my lord Raghubar, who reads all hearts. By repeating his name the most abandoned of sinners cancels the accumulated crimes of many previous existences ; and by those who devoutly meditate upon him the ocean of life is as easily crossed as a puddle in the road. Ráma, O Bhaváni, is the Supreme Spirit, and the error to which you gave utterance on this point was most improper. Such doubt, when entertained in the heart, destroys knowledge, sobriety and every virtue." On hearing Siva's luminous exposition, the whole structure of heresy fell to pieces ; her love and devotion to Raghupati grew strong and her sore incredulity passed away.

Dohá 126.

Again and again clasping her lord's lotus feet and suppliantly folding her hands, her whole soul overflowing with affection, Girijá thus spoke and said,—

¹ None hath beheld him, none,
Seen above other gods and shapes of things,
Swift without feet and flying without wings.

—*Swinburne.*

Chaupái 120.

"My grievous delusion, like the feverish heat of autumn, has yielded to the moon-like spell of your voice. In your compassion you have removed all my doubt, and I now understand the very Ráma. By my lord's mercy my distress is all gone, and I am made glad by his favour. Now regarding me as your own immediate servant, though I am but a poor ignorant woman, if I have really found grace in your sight, reply to those my former questions. If Ráma is the invisible and immortal God, without parts and passions, and whose temple is the heart, why did he take the form of a man? Declare and explain this to me." On hearing Umá's modest speech, and perceiving her sincere desire to be instructed in Ráma's history,

Dohú 127.

The all-wise Sankara, the destroyer of Kámadeva, was glad of heart, and with many words of praise was thus pleased to speak,—

Sorathú 11—13.

"Listen, Bhaváni, while I recite in auspicious strains the Rámcharit-mánas, or pure lake of Ráma's deeds, as of old Bhusundi¹ declared it in the hearing of Garur, the king of the birds. First I will relate the manner of their exalted converse, after which you shall hear of Ráma's incarnation and his all-glorious and sinless deeds. Hari's virtues and names are infinite, and his history and his manifestations beyond number or measure; I tell them as best I can; listen, Umá, with respect.

Chaupái 121.

Listen, Girijá, to the grateful tale of Hari's great and holy acts, as they have been recorded in the scriptures. The

¹ Kíka-bhusundi, originally a Sudra of Ayodhya, was by virtue of his birth in that holy place and the intercession of a saint of Ujjain born again as a Bráhmaṇ. His exclusive devotion to Ráma could not suffer him to listen to the Rishi Lomas when he made Brahm the theme of his discourse, and the sage was so annoyed that he changed him for a time into a crow (*Káka*). His story is told at length in Book VII.

cause of Hari's incarnation is not to be dogmatically defined; for to my mind, Bhaváni, Ráma is beyond the grasp of intellect, or soul, or speech; yet as saints and sages, the Veda and the Puránas have partly and to the extent of their capacity explained the matter, so I, fair dame, will now declare to you the cause as I understand it. Whenever virtue decays, and evil spirits, waxing strong in pride, work iniquity that cannot be told, to the confusion of Brahmans, cows, gods and earth itself, the compassionate Lord assumes some new bodily form; relieves the distress of the faithful;

Dohá 128.

Destroys the evil spirits; reinstates the gods; maintains the way of salvation; and diffuses the brightness of his glory throughout the world. Such are the motives of Ráma's incarnations.

Chaupái 122.

Singing his glory, the saints escape the waves of life, and it is for their sake only that the Compassionate assumes a body. The causes of Ráma's incarnations have been many and various, each more wonderful than the other. I will relate one or two of his previous births, if, Bhaváni, you are prepared to give me your devout attention. Hari had once two loving door-keepers, the famous Jaya and Bijaya: both brothers, in consequence of a Bráhma's curse, were born again in the form of the malignant demons Hiranya-kasipu and Hiranyáksha, who became celebrated throughout the world as the tammers of the pride of the king of heaven. Incarnate as a Boar, he triumphed in battle over the first illustrious hero and destroyed him, and again, in the Narsinh avatár, slew the second: the fame of the faithful Prahlád is widespread.

Dohá 129.

Then the evil spirits went and took birth as the bold and powerful warriors Kumbha-karn and Rávan, who, as all the world knows, subdued even the gods.

Chaupái 123.

Though killed by the deity, they did not attain to salvation, for the Bráhmaṇ had doomed them to three births. They then were once the cause why the cherisher of the faithful assumed a body, and at that time his parents Kasyapa and Aditi were incarnate as Dasarath and Kausalya of glorious memory. Thus it was that in that age of the world he descended from heaven and wrought saving deeds on earth. In another age, seeing the gods distressed and waging ineffectual battle with Jalandhar, Sambhu warred against him times without number, but could not subdue the valiant giant, for the exceeding virtue of his wife protected him against Purári's every attack.

Dohá 130.

By a stratagem the Lord broke her vow and effected the will of the gods. When she discovered the deception, then in her wrath she cursed him.

Chaupái 124.

And Hari did according to her curse ; for though the Lord God, he is full of playfulness and of mercy. So Jalandhar was born as Rávan, and being killed in battle by Ráma attained to high glory. This then was the cause of one birth and the reason why Ráma then assumed a human form. Each avatár has its legend, which the poets have sung in various ways and according to tradition. "On one occasion it was Nárad's curse that caused him to become incarnate." At this saying Girijá was astounded,—“Nárad is a wise saint and a votary of Vishnu's ; what was his reason for uttering a curse ? What offence had Lakshmi's lord committed ? Tell me the whole story, Purári ; it is passing strange that a saint should be subject to passion.”

Dohá 131.

Then answered Mahádeva with a smile,—“There is neither wise nor fool ; man is ever such as Raghupati will have him to be.

Sorathá 14.

I sing the glory of Ráma; listen devoutly, O Bharadvája; and do thou, O Tulsi, put away the intoxication of pride and worship Raghunáth, the destroyer of death.

Chaupái 125.

In the Himálaya mountains is a very sacred cave close to the holy Ganges. Seeing this pure and delightful hermitage, the divine sage Nárad was greatly pleased; and as he gazed upon the beauty of the rocks and the forest glades he was filled with love to God, and as he thought upon Hari the curse was broken¹ and his spotless soul fell all at once into a trance. When the king of heaven saw the sage's state he feared, and in terms of high respect addressed himself to Kámadeva,—“Go, I beg, with your assistant.” He then, the god of love, went very gladly; but in Indra's mind was great alarm, for he thought,—‘The saint would rob me of my kingdom.’ All the world over, a gallant or a miser is as much afraid of interference as is a thievish crow.

Dohá 132.

Like a wretched dog that on seeing a lion runs away with the dry bone it has in its mouth, for fear it should be taken from him, so was Indra in his shamelessness.

Chaupái 126.

When Love reached the hermitage, his deceptive power created a false spring. All the trees broke out into many-coloured blossoms, there was a murmuring of cuckoos and a humming of bees. A delightful air, soft, cool and fragrant, sprung up fanning the flame of desire; while Rambhá and the other heavenly nymphs, all well skilled in the art of love, began singing songs in every variety of measure and disporting themselves in the dance with waving hands. When Love saw himself so well supported, he was glad and again manifested his creative power in diverse ways; but his devices had no effect upon the saint; and guilty Love began

1 The curse had been pronounced by Daksha.

to tremble for himself. Who dare trespass on his bounds who has the great Ramápati for a guardian ?

Dohá 133.

In dire dismay both Kámadeva and his accomplice confessed themselves defeated, and went and clasped the holy man's feet, addressing him in accents of the deepest humility.

Chaupái 127.

There was no anger in Nárad's soul, who in friendly terms replied to Kámadeva and reassured him. Then bowing the head at his feet and accepting his commands, they both retired, the god and his companion ; and repairing to Indra's court there related all their own doings and the saint's clemency. As they listened to the tale all were astonished, and bowing the head to Hari extolled the saint. Then went Nárad to Siva, greatly proud of his victory over Love, and told him all Love's doings. In acknowledgment of his affection Mahádeva gave him good advice,—“ O great saint, again and again I beg of you never to repeat to Hari this story that you have now told me : should it happen to be brought forward, keep it as dark as possible.”

Dohá 134.

Good as the advice was, it did not please Nárad. O Bharadvája, listen to the strange recital and see the strength of Hari's will.

Chaupái 128.

What Ráma wills to have done is done, and there is no one who can alter it. As Sambhu's words did not please the saint, he went straight to Bráhma's court, and, to the accompaniment of the famous lute that he had in his hand, sung right through the excellent song of Hari's praises. Then he passed on to the milky ocean, where abides Vishnu, the glory of revelation. The Lord ran to meet him in great joy, and side by side they sat together. Said the sovereign of the universe with a smile,—‘ Reverend sir, 'tis long since you last

did me this honour.' Then Nárad declared all Love's doings, though Siva had beforehand cautioned him ; the deceptive power of Raghupati is so strong that there is no man living who can resist it.

Dohá 135.

Then spoke the great god, with an austere look, but in flattering terms,—“ Self-delusion and the intoxicating arrogance of love shall perish at the remembrance of your doings.¹

Chaupái 129.

Know, O saint, that infatuation prevails in a soul that is devoid of wisdom and self-control ; but what pain can Love cause to one so steadfast in asceticism as yourself ?” Said Nárad in his pride,—‘ It is all your favour, my Lord.’ The Compassionate saw into his heart and thought within himself,—“ Pride like a huge tree has sprouted in his soul : I must at once tear it up by the roots ; ever to relieve my servants is the vow that I have made. I will surely contrive some sportive device on behalf of the saint.” Then Nárad bowed his head at Hari’s feet and took his leave, swelling with pride ; while Vishnu gave orders to the spirit of delusion. Listen now to his strange contrivance.

Dohá 136.

He constructed on the road a city a hundred leagues in circumference, with everything more perfect than even in Vishnu’s own capital,

Chaupái 130.

And inhabited by such graceful men and women that you would take them all to be incarnations of Kámadeva and Rati. The king of the city, by name Síla-nidhi, had horses,

¹ Siva’s speech is so ambiguously worded that it really conveys a censure, while Nárad interprets it as a compliment. The hidden meaning is : Hereafter when you reflect upon this incident and all its consequences, you will take a lesson by it and be more humble, remembering your weakness ; but the more obvious meaning of the words and that in which Nárad took them is : By meditating on your triumph over Love, other men will triumph too.

elephants and troops beyond number ; his royal pomp like that of a hundred Indras ; himself a centre of power, policy and magnificence. His daughter Visva-mohani was so beautiful that even Lakshmi would be put to the blush and by Hari's delusive power was in every way so exquisite that no words could describe her. As the princess was selecting a husband, kings beyond number came as suitors. The saint, too, came to the fairy city and began making inquiries of the people. When he had heard all that was going on he proceeded to the palace, where the king most respectfully gave him a seat,

Dohá 137.

And then brought his daughter for him to see, saying,—
'Tell me, good sir, after consideration, all that is good or bad about her.'

Chaupái 131.

When Nárad saw her beauty, he forgot his vow of chastity and continued long gazing upon her. Her features quite fascinated him ; yet he would not in words express his heart's delight. "Her bridegroom must be one of the immortals, invincible in battle, revered by all creation ; such a one must Sila-nidhi's daughter wed." But though he calculated her fortune thus correctly, he kept it to himself, and after saying something or other to the king, to the effect that his daughter would be of good fortune, he went away full of anxiety, considering,—“What scheme can I devise now so as to make her marry me. No time is this for prayers or penance ; good God, how am I to get the girl ?

Dohá 138.

I must on this occasion make myself exceedingly charming and beautiful, so that the princess may be pleased when she sees me and give me the wreath of victory.

Chaupái 132.

I will ask Hari for the gift of beauty ; in going to him there will be much delay ; but I have no other such friend,

and this is an opportunity for him to help me." So he offered up a fervent prayer and the merciful Lord appeared to him in a vision. The saint's eyes brightened at the sight and he rejoiced in heart, saying,—‘My object will be accomplished.’ He then with the utmost humility told his tale, and added,—“O, my Lord, be gracious and assist me. Bestow on me beauty equal to your own ; for in no other way can I get possession of her. Make haste to accomplish my success ; for lo, I am your slave.” When the Compassionate saw the mighty influence of the deception he had wrought, he smiled to himself :

Dohá 139.

“Hear, O Nárad ; I will assuredly bring about your highest good that and nought else ; nor shall my words prove vain.

Charupái 133.

If a sick man in the weariness of disease ask for what will harm him, mark me, holy ascetic, the physician will not grant it. In the same way will I act as is best for you.” So saying the Lord vanished. The saint was so demented by the power of the delusion that he did not understand Hari's hidden meaning, but hastened at once to the spot where the marriage arena had been prepared. The Rájás were seated rank upon rank, each with his retinue in grand attire. The saint thought joyfully within himself,—‘My beauty is such that she will never leave me to wed another.’ But the merciful God, the saint's true friend, had made him hideous beyond all description. Every one recognized him as Nárad and bowed the head, knowing nothing of what had taken place.

Dohá 140.

Now there were there two of Siva's attendants who knew the whole secret. Dressed like Bráhmans, they seemed to be spectators of the show, walking here and there and looking about.

Chaupái 134

Both went and sat down in the same group with the saint so proud of his beauty ; and in their Bráhmanical attire they attracted no notice. They say in jest so that Nárad might hear,—‘Hari has given this man such excellent beauty that the princess will be charmed with his appearance and will certainly wed him, taking him for Hari himself.’ The saint was so utterly subjugated by passion that Sambhu’s servants could laugh and jeer as they liked, and though he heard their mockery, his intellect was too bewildered to understand it. No one perceived the transformation save only the princess, who on beholding him just as he was with his monkey face and deformed body was quite disgusted at the sight,

Dohá 141.

And with her handmaids glided like a swan through the long line of kings with the wreath of victory in her lotus hands.

Chaupái 135.

She would not let her eyes rest for a moment on the spot where Nárad was sitting in his pride. The saint in his anxiety kept fidgetting about, and Siva’s attendants smiled to see the state he was in. Then entered the Compassionate in form as a king, and gladly the princess cast on him the garland. Thus Lakshmi’s lord carried off the bride, to the despair of the assembled kings. The saint was much disturbed : in his infatuation his reason was quite gone, like a diamond dropt out of a hole in a bag. Then Siva’s attendants said with a smile,—‘Get a glass and look at yourself’; and having so said both ran away in great alarm. The saint looked at his reflection in the water. When he saw himself, he was furious and cursed them with a grievous curse :

Dohá 142.

‘Go false and guilty pair, and take birth as demons of the night. Be this your reward for mocking me ; mock again a saint, if you dare.’

Chaupái 136.

Looking again in the water he saw himself in his proper form ; yet still he was not content at heart, but his lip quivered with rage, and in haste he betook himself to Vishnu. ‘Shall I curse him or kill myself, seeing that he has made a mock of me throughout the world ?’ On the way the conqueror of demons met him, and with him Rāma and the princess. With a smile and in gentle tones he said,—‘Where goes the saint, like one distracted ?’ On hearing these words, his anger rose, and infatuation utterly mastered his reason,—“You never could bear to look upon another’s prosperity ; your envy and deceit are notorious ; at the churning of the ocean you drove Siva mad and made the gods quaff the poisoned cup.

Dohá 143.

Intoxicating liquor was the demon’s share, and the poison was for Mahádeva ; but for yourself Rāma and the *Kaustubha* jewel. You have ever been selfish and perverse and treacherous in your dealings.

Chaupái 137.

Utterly self-willed, with no one over you, and bent on doing whatever comes into your mind ; confounding the good and exalting the bad ; with a heart incapable either of surprise or pleasure ; trying every one with your tricks, without the slightest consideration and in mere lightness of heart. Neither good deeds nor bad in any way affect you, nor has any one up to the present ever succeeded in restraining you. Now for this fine treat that you have given me you shall receive a due return. Be born in the form in which you have now imposed upon me ; this is my curse. And as you have made me like a monkey, you shall have monkeys for helpmates ; and in the same way as you have sorely wronged me, so shall you be distressed by the loss of your wife.”

Dohá 144.

The lord gladly accepted the curse, thus working the

will of the gods, and in his compassion withdrew the influence of his deceptive power.

Chaupái 138.

When this was removed, there appeared neither Ráma nor the princess ; and the saint fell in great fear at the feet of Hari, ever ready to heal the sorrows of a suppliant, crying,—“May my curse be made of no effect.” Said the gracious god,—‘It is my will.’ Said the saint,—I have spoken many injurious words ; how shall my guilt be expiated ? “Go and repeat Sankara’s hundred names, and your soul will at once be relieved. There is no one so dear to me as Siva ; never let your faith in this truth be shaken. He on whom Siva will not show mercy shall never know true love to me. Think on this as you wander over the earth ; the delusion haunts you no longer.”

Dohá 145.

Having thus reassured the saint, the lord disappeared, and Nárad took his way to Paradise, chanting Ráma’s praises as he went.

Chaupái 139.

Siva’s two followers saw him on the road rejoicing and in his right mind. In great alarm they drew near, and clasping his feet made their supplication : “O great saint we are not Bráhmans, but servants of Mahádeva, and have reaped the fruit of our great sin : in your mercy remove the curse.” Said the compassionate Nárad,—“You must both be born as demons of vast power, majesty and strength ; but when you have subdued the universe by the might of your arm, Vishnu shall take upon him human form, and dying in battle at his hands you shall attain to salvation, nor ever be born again.” After bowing their head at his feet, both went their way and in due course were born as demons.

Dohá 146.

In one age this was the reason why the lord became in-

earnate, to gladden the gods, to comfort the saints, and to ease earth of its burdens.

Chaupái 140.

Thus Hari's births and actions are many and various, but all of them glorious and beneficent. In every age he has manifested himself and wrought many excellent works ; and on each occasion great saints have sung his acts in holy strains of choicest verse, relating marvellous histories of diverse kinds, which the wise hear without any amazement. For as Hari is without end, so are there endless verses about him, which are heard and repeated by scripture and the faithful. The delightful adventures of Rámchandra could not all be sung in a myriad ages. This story that I have now told, Bhaváni, shows how Hari's deceptive power can infatuate even saints and sages. He, the lord, is sportive, gracious to suppliants, accessible to his servants, and a remover of all sorrow.

Sorathá 15.

There is neither god, man, nor saint whom unreality has not infatuated. Reflect upon this and worship the great master of the unreal.

Chaupái 141.

Hear, O daughter of the Himálaya, a second reason, which I will proceed to relate at full length, why the uncreated, the passionless, the incomparable Brahm became King of Kosala. The lord, whom you saw roaming in the forest with his brother in hermit's attire ; at whose doings, Bhaváni, you in Sati's form lost your senses, and still to this day have a touch of disease ; the recital of his adventures will heal all your sickness. All his sportive acts in that incarnation I am now about to tell as best I can." O Bharadvája, on hearing Sankara thus speak, the modest and affectionate Umá smiled for joy, while her lord continued,—“The cause of the incarnation

Dohá 147.

I am now about to explain (listen, great saint, with attention to the delightful story of Râma, which can cleanse all the stains of the world and bring man to heaven)

Chaupái 142.

Manu, the son of the self-existing, had to wife Satarûpa, and of them were born the whole human race ; even to this day the fame of their virtue and conjugal fidelity is celebrated in the scriptures. Their son was King Uttanapâda, who begot Hari's faithful client Dhruva. The younger son, by name Priya-vrata, is mentioned with praise both by the Vedas and Purânas. Their daughter, Devahuti, became the devoted wife of Saint Kardama, and in her womb the eternal Lord God, in his mercy and compassion, planted Kapila, the author of the Sâṅkhya philosophy, the divine exponent of the theory of entities. This Manu reigned a long while, keeping all God's commandments.

Sorathá 16.

But in a palace complete detachment from the senses is impracticable. Old age came upon him, and he thought with grief,—‘My life has been spent without any true devotion to Hari.’

Chaupái 143.

Then perforce he resigned the thorne to his son, and with his queen repaired to the forest, to Naimisha, famous among all holy places as specially sacred and liberal of success. Glad of heart, King Manu sought the spot where dwelt the company of saints and sages ; and as the resolute pair passed along the way they seemed incarnations of Wisdom and Faith. On reaching the bank of the Gomati, they bathed with delight in the clear stream ; and there the inspired saints and sages came to meet them, recognizing in the king a champion of religion. Devoutly they took them to visit each different shrine, and with wasted body, clad in hermit's robes, they are ever in the assembly of the faithful listening to the Purânas.

Dohá 148.

Devoutly repeating the twelve-lettered charm¹, and with their whole soul directed to the lotus feet of Vāsudevā.

Chaupái 144.

Meditating on the Supreme Brahm, they live on leaves and fruits and roots. Then doing penance as before Hari, they gave up roots and fruits for water only. In heart an endless craving,—“O that we might see with our eyes the very God, without parts or passions ; without beginning or end ; whom the preachers of salvation contemplate ; whom the Vedas define as the unutterable ; the pure spirit, without attributes and beyond all comparison ; as part of whom are produced in various forms the lords Sambhu, Bráhma, and Vishnu. Yet so great a god submits to his own servants, and for their sake assumes in sport a body. If this be true, as the scriptures have declared, our desire will of a surety be accomplished.”

Dohá 149.

In this way they spent six thousand years living only on water ; and then seven thousand, living only on air.

Chaupái 145.

For ten thousand years they gave up even this and remained both standing on one leg. Now Bráhma, Hari and Hara saw this interminable penance and repeatedly came near to Manu and tempted him, saying,— ‘ Ask your boon ;’ but for all their persuasion he was too steadfast to move. Though his body was reduced to a skeleton, there was not the least pain in his soul. Then the omniscient lord knew that the king and queen were his servants and had this single object in practicing such austerities. A solemn voice full of ambrosial grace sounded in the sky, saying : Ask, ask ; a voice so blithe that it would wake the dead. As it dropped upon the ears of their soul, their bodies became again as comely and stout as if they had only that day left their home.

¹ The twelve-lettered charm is *Om Manu Bhagavate Vāsudevāya*

Dohá 150.

As the ambrosial voice rung in their ears, their body quivered and thrilled; and falling on the ground in an irrepressible transport of love Manu thus spoke,—

Chaupái 146.

“Hearken, O thou that art as the tree of paradise or the sacred cow to thy servants; the dust on whose feet is ever worshipped by Brähma, Hari and Hara; accessible to the faithful; bounteous of all good; protector of suppliants; lord of all creation: if, O friend of the friendless, I have found favour in thy sight, then in thy mercy grant me this boon: Let me with mine own eyes behold thee in that form in which thou dwellest in Siva’s breast, which the saints desire to see; the swan in the lake of Blusundi’s soul; the sum and the negation of all attributes; the theme of the Veda: do me this grace, O thou that healest the woes of every suppliant.” This gentle, submissive and affectionate speech of the wedded pair went to the heart of the generous and merciful god; and the sovereign of the universe manifested himself,

Dohá 151.

In hue as the lotus or the sapphire; dark as a rain-cloud; of such lustrous form that a myriad Loves could not be compared to it,

Chaupái 147.

With a face perfect in beauty like the autumnal moon; with lovely checks and chin and dimpled neck, red lips and gleaming teeth, and a nose and smile more radiant than a moonbeam; eyes bright as a lotus bud and a glance to fascinate the heart; brows surpassing Love’s bow; on the forehead a sectarial mark and glistening star; golden fish in his ears and a bright crown on his head; crisp curling hair like a swarm of bees; on his breast the Srivatsa jewel and a long wreath of sweet wild flowers, and jewelled adornments about his neck; a waist like a lion, a comely Brähmanical

thread, and exquisite clasps upon his arms, long and round as an elephant's trunk ; with a quiver at his side and bow and arrow in his hand ;

Dohá 152.

His yellow apparel more lustrous than the lightning ; his body charmingly dimpled, and his navel like a bee hovering over the dark wave of the Jamuná ;

Chaupái 148.

His feet beautiful beyond description, lotus haunt of the bee-like souls of the saints. On his left side shines in equal glory the Primal Energy, queen of beauty, mother of the world ; of whose members are born countless Umás and Rámas and Bráhmaṇis, all alike perfect ; by the play of whose eyebrows a world flashes into existence, even Śita, enthroned at Ráma's side. As Manu and Satarúpa beheld this vision of Hari in all his beauty, gazing fixedly with open eyes, they adored his incomparable magnificence, nor could be satiated with the sight. Overcome with delight and transported out of themselves, they fell flat on the ground, clasping his feet in their hands. But the gracious lord putting his lotus hand upon their heads quickly raised them up,

Dohá 153.

And again said,—“Be assured that you have found favour with me : ask whatever boon you will, the largest gift you can think of.”

Chaupái 149.

On hearing the lord's words they clasped their hands in prayer, and taking courage thus spoke in timid accents, —“O lord, we have seen your lotus feet, and our every object has been accomplished. Yet one longing remains, and I know not whether to describe it as easy or difficult of attainment. It is easy, my master, for you to give ; but so far as my meanness is concerned, it is difficult. Like a beggar who has found the wishing-tree, but trembles to ask for too good fortune, not realizing its full power, so my

heart is troubled by doubt. O my god, you read all hearts and know what I wish ; grant me my desire.”—“ O king, fear not, but ask of me ; there is nothing I would not give you.”

Dohá 154.

“ O gracious lord, I will declare honestly the crowning boon ; for what concealment can there be ? I would have a son like you.”

Chaupái 150.

On seeing his love and hearing his sincere words, said the Compassionate, “ So be it.” “ Where can I go to find your equal ? ” “ I myself, O king, will be born as your son.” Then seeing Satarúpa with her hands still clasped,—“ O lady, ask whatever boon you please.” “ O my lord, the boon my husband has wisely asked is what I too should most desire. But it is great presumption ; though in your clemency you have confirmed it. You are father of all the gods, the lord of the world, the supreme spirit, the omniscient ; and therefore my mind doubts ; and yet the Lord’s words cannot fail. O my god, the bliss that is enjoyed and the future state that is attained by your own servants—

Dohá 155.

In your mercy grant to me even that bliss, that state, that devotion, that love to your feet, that knowledge, and that existence.”

Chaupái 151.

Hearing this modest and deeply touching petition, the Compassionate gently replied :—“ Fear not ; whatever your mind desires that I have granted. O mother, your supernatural wisdom by my favour shall never fail.” Then again spoke Mann, bowing at his feet,—“ I too have another petition, my lord. Is there any one who will not call me fool for devoting myself to your feet simply on account of a son ? As a snake’s hood without a jewel, or a fish without water, so is my life dependent upon you.” Begging this boon, he remained clasp-

ing his feet till the All-merciful said,—“Be it so : now, as I order, go and dwell at Indra’s capital.

Sorathá 18.

There, father, enjoy yourself freely ; and again, when some time has passed, be born as the King of Avadh, and I will be your son.

Chaupái 152.

Voluntarily assuming human guise, I will manifest myself in your house, father, and, with every element of my divinity incarnate will do great deeds for the consolation of my people. Blessed are they who listen reverently ; quitting the vain conceits of self they shall pass over the ocean of life. Even the Primal Energy, by whom the visible world was created, that self-same shadow of me here present, shall also become incarnate. I will accomplish your desire ; true is my promise, true, aye ! true.” Again and again thus saying, the compassionate lord vanished out of sight, and the wedded pair, full of faith in the All-merciful, stayed for a while at the hermitage, and then, when their time was come, passed painlessly out of the body and took up their abode in Amaravati, the city of the immortals.

Dohá 156.

Such was the pious legend which Siva related to Umá. Hearken now, O Bharadvája, to yet another motive for Ráma’s incarnation.

Chaupái 153.

Listen, great saint, to the holy and hoary tale as it was repeated by Sambhu to Girijá. There is a world-famous country called Kekaya, and Satya-ketu was its king. A champion of religion ; a storehouse of good policy ; great in glory, magnificence, virtue and power. He had two gallant sons, staunch in fight, endowed with every good quality. The elder and the heir to the kingdom was named Pratápa-bhánu, and the other Ari-mardan, of unequalled strength of arm and like a rock to stand the brunt of battle. The sympathy between brother and brother was perfect, and their

mutual affection without either flaw or disguise.¹ To the elder son the king resigned the realm, and withdrew into the wood to devote himself to religion.

Dohá 157.

When Pratápa-bhánu became king, proclamation was made throughout all the land : Under a sovereign so skilled in sacred lore not a speck of sin will be allowed anywhere.

Chaupái. 154.

The prime minister, Dharma-ruchi, a second Sukra,² was as devoted to the king as he was wise. With a prudent counsellor, valiant kinsmen, himself a glorious leader in war with a countless host of horse and foot, and chariots and elephants, and fighting men beyond number, all eager for the fray, the king might well rejoice as he inspected his army 'mid the clash of tumultuous music. Having selected an auspicious day, he marched forth with a special force, bent on universal conquest. In all his numerous battles, wherever they took place, the pride of kings was abased ; all the seven continents were reduced by the might of his arm, and their princes escaped only on payment of tribute. At that time Pratápa-bhánu became the sole monarch of the whole round world.

Dohá 158.

Having thus subdued the universe by the might of his arm, he re-entered his capital and devoted himself in turn to business, duty, love and religion.

Chaupái 155.

The grateful earth, invigorated by Pratápa-bhánu's sway, became a very Kámadhenu, and all his subjects, both men and women, happy and free from all annoy, grew in

¹ I read this couplet as follows : *Bháñi bháñi param samiti, sahal-dosh-ahhal-varjita priti*: the penultimate syllable of *samiti* being lengthened *metri gratia*. Such a license is of frequent occurrence; but in this particular instance it appears to have troubled the copyists, who have made various substitutions all more or less injurious to the sense.

² The regent of the planet Sukra (Venus) is the preceptor of the *Daityas*, or Titans.

virtue and beauty. The minister Dharma-ruchi, devoted servant of Hari, lovingly instructed his lord in state policy ; nor did the king ever fail in due reverence either to his spiritual teacher, or the gods, or the saints, or his departed ancestors, or the Bráhmans. All the duties which are enjoined upon kings in the Veda he carefully and gladly performed ; every day he made large offerings and heard the scriptures read, both the Veda and the Puránas ; and he constructed many baths and wells and tanks, flower gardens and beautiful orchards, handsome monasteries and temples, and also restored every ancient shrine.

Dohá 159.

For every single sacrifice enjoined in the scriptures or the Puránas the king in his zeal performed a thousand.

Chaupái 156.

In his heart there was no aiming after advantage, but such was his supreme knowledge and intelligence that he dedicated to God the whole merit of all his thoughts, words, and actions. One day he mounted his gallant steed and went, with his retinue equipt for the chase, into a dense forest of the Vindhyaçal mountains and killed many fine deer. As he ranged the wood, he spied a wild boar, showing amid the foliage like Ráhu with the moon in his clutch ; its orb too large to be contained in his mouth, though his rage will not suffer him to entirely disgorge it. The monstrous boar with its splendid tusks, as I have described them, and its vast limbs of immeasurable bulk, growled when he heard the tramp of the horse : it, too, at the sight started and pricked up its ears.

Dohá 160.

On seeing the huge boar, resembling some purple mountain-peak, the horse started aside, and it was only by much spurring and persuasion that the king could prevent it from breaking away.

Chaupái 157.

When it saw the horse coming on with speed, the beast took to flight swift as the wind, keeping close to the ground as it went, and ever regarding the shaft which the king had at once fitted to his bow. Taking steady aim he let it fly ; but the boar saved himself by his wiliness, and rushed on now well in sight, and now altogether hidden, while the king in much excitement followed closely on his track. At length it reached a dense thicket impenetrable by horse or elephant. Though alone in the wood and distressed by his exertions, still the king would not abandon the chase ; till the boar seeing him so determined slunk away into a deep cave. When the king perceived that there was no getting near him, he was quite sad, and moreover he had lost his way in this hunt through so great a forest.

Dohá 161.

Hungry and thirsty and exhausted with fatigue the king and his horse kept searching in much distress for a stream or pond, and were half dead for want of water.

Chaupái 158.

As he wandered through the forest, he spied a hermitage where dwelt a king in disguise of a holy man. He had been despoiled of his kingdom by Pratápa-bhánu, and had left his army on the field of battle, knowing that his adversary's star was in the ascendant and his own in the decline. Too proud to meet the king, too much mortified to go home, nursing the rage in his heart, he like a beggar, though a prince, took up his abode in the wood in the garb of an anchorite. He at once recognized King Pratápa-bhánu as he drew near ; but the latter was too tired to recognize him, and looking only at his dress took him to be a holy man, and alighting from his horse saluted him ; he was, however, too astute to declare his name.

Dohá 162.

Seeing the king to be faint with thirst, he pointed out

to him a fine pond, where he bathed and drank, both he and his horse, with much gladness.

Chaupái 159.

All his weariness passed away and he was quite happy again. The hermit took him to his cell and, as the sun had now set, showed him where he might rest ; but yet enquired of him in courteous tones,—“ Who may you be, and why, thus young and beautiful, do you risk your life by roaming alone in the forest ? You have all the marks of a great sovereign, and at the sight of you I am quite moved.” “ Know then, reverend sir, that I am the minister of King Pratápa-bhánu ; in pursuit of the chase I have lost my way, and by great good fortune have been brought into your presence. To get a sight of you was no easy matter, and I am satisfied that something good is about to befall me.” Said the hermit,—“ My son, it is now dusk, and your city is seventy leagues away.

Dohí 163-4.

The night is dark, the forest dense, and the road not easy to find. Tarry then here for to-day and start to-morrow at dawn.” Says Tulsi—Fate is furthered in its own way ; either you go to meet it, or itself comes and carries you off.

Chaupái 160.

“ Very well, my lord, I obey your command ;” and so saying the king tied up his horse to a tree and came and sat down. With many flattering speeches he bowed at his feet, extolling his own good fortune, and at last in modest and winning terms put the question,—“ Regarding you, my lord, as a father, I make bold and beg of you to look upon me as your son and servant and to declare to me your name.” Now the king did not recognize him, but he recognized the king, and was as false and crafty as the king was honest : moreover, being an enemy, and at the same time both a warrior by caste and of royal birth, he was bent on accomplishing his own ends, whether by fraud or by right. In his enmity he was

grieved to see the king's prosperity, and his heart within him burned as with the fire of a furnace; but on hearing the prince's simple words he controlled his resentment and was glad at heart,

Dohá 165.

and uttered yet another smooth but false and artful speech,—
 “My name is now Bhikhári, a homeless beggar.”

Chaupái 161.

Said the king,—“Philosophers like you, with whom all self-consciousness has been extinguished, ever conceal their own personality, and are in every way blessed, though their outer garb be wretched. Therefore the saints proclaim aloud in men's ears that it is the poor whom Hari holds most dear. A poor and homeless beggar, such as you are, is an anxiety to Bráhma and Siva: at all events, I prostrate myself at your feet and beg of you to grant me your grace.” When he saw the king's simple affection he waxed all the more confident, and won him over in every way, using words with a still greater show of friendliness,—“Hearken, O king, while I relate the truth of the matter. I have for a long time dwelt here,

Dohá 166.

and till now neither has any one come to me, nor have I spoken to any one; for worldly honour is like a fire, and penance a forest for it to consume.”

Sorathá 19.

Says Tulsi:—Fools are deceived by fair appearances, but not wise men: though a peacock is fair to look upon and its voice is pleasant,¹ yet it devours the snake.

Chaupái 162.

“Therefore I live retired in the world, and, save Hari,

¹ The peacock's voice can scarcely be called pleasant in itself, but it may be so by association as a sign of the coming rains. Thus Cowper:

“Sounds inharmonious in themselves and harsh,
 Yet heard in scenes where peace for ever reigns,
 And only there, please highly for their sake.”

have no care whatever. The Lord knows everything without being told ; so what is to be gained by conciliating the world? But you are so good and sensible that I cannot but love you in return for the faith and confidence you have placed in me: and if I were to send you away, my son, it would be a very grievous sin on my part." The more the hermit talked of his detachment from the world, the more trustful grew the king ; till at last the false anchorite, seeing him completely in his power, said,—“My name, brother, is Ektanu” (one body). The king bowed and asked further,—“Tell me, I pray, the meaning of this name, for surely I am your servant.”

Dohá 167.

“At the first dawn of creation my birth took place, and my name was Ektanu, for this reason that I have never taken any other body.

Chaupái 163.

“Marvel not in your mind, my son ; for nothing is too difficult for penance. By the power of penance the Creator created the world ; by the power of penance Vishnu is the great redeemer ; by the power of penance Siva works destruction ; and to penance there is nothing in the world impossible.” The king, as he listened, was charmed, for he commenced relating old-world stories ; many legends of pious deeds and holy lives ; examples of asceticism and divine wisdom ; tales of the birth, preservation, and destruction of the world, and innumerable other marvellous narratives. The king, as he listened, yielded completely to his influence, and proceeded to tell him his true name. Said the hermit,—“O king, I knew you ; though you tried to practise a trick upon me, I took it quite in good part.

Sorathí 20.

“Hear, O king ; it is a political maxim that on some occasions a king should not declare his name ; and when I observed your excellent sagacity I conceived a great affection for you.

Chaupái 164.

“Your name is Pratápa-bhánu, and your father is king Satyaketu. O sir, a spiritual man knows everything, there is no need of another’s telling. Ah, my son, when I beheld your natural goodness, your faith and trustfulness, and your knowledge of state-craft, there sprung up an affection for you in my soul, and I told you my own story as you asked me. Now I am well pleased with you; doubt not, but ask whatever you will.” On hearing these fair words the king was delighted, and clasping his feet entreated him suppliantly,—“O merciful saint, by the sight of you the four objects of human desire have all come within my grasp. Yet, as I see my lord so gracious, I will ask an impossible boon and be happy for ever.

Dohá 168.

May I die of old age, free from bodily pain; may I never be conquered in battle: may earth rid of every foe be all under my sole sway, and may my empire last for a hundred ages.”

Chaupái 165.

Said the anchorite,—“O king, so be it; there is, however, one difficulty; hear it. The age shall bow down before you, with the sole exception of the Bráhmans. By the virtue of penance a Bráhman is ever powerful, and there is none who can deliver from his wrath. If you can reduce them to your will, Bráhma, Vishnu and Mahádeva will also be at your command. But against a Bráhman might is of no avail: with both arms raised to heaven I tell you this solemn truth. Harken, O king, if you escape a Bráhman’s curse, your destruction shall never be.” On hearing his promise the king was glad,—“Then, my lord, my destruction will never be; by your favour, most gracious sir, I shall be prosperous for all time.”

Dohá 169.

“Amen,” said the false hermit, and added with crafty

intent,—“If you let any one know of your losing your way and your meeting with me, that will not be my fault.

Chaupái 166.

“For I warn you, sir, that it is most inexpedient to repeat the matter : if it come to a third pair of ears, I tell you true it will be your ruin. If you divulge this secret, or if a Bráhmaṇ curse you, you are undone, O Prátápa-bhánu. When Hari and Hara are wroth, wretched man has no other way of escape.” “True, my lord,” said the king, clasping his feet ; “who can deliver from the wrath of a Bráhmaṇ or a spiritual director ? The guru can save from Bráhma’s anger, but if the guru himself be wroth, there is none in the world that can save. If I do not follow your advice, I have not the slightest doubt that I shall perish ; but my soul is disturbed by one fear ; the curse of a Bráhmaṇ is something most terrible.

Dohá 170.

“Of your great goodness, tell me in what way I can win over the Bráhmaṇs ; for except you, my gracious lord, I have no other friend.”

Chaupái 167.

“Hearken, O king, there are diverse expedients among men, but hard to put in practice and of doubtful issue. There is, however, one very simple plan, though even this involves a difficulty. Its contrivance depends upon me, and for me to go to your capital is out of the question ; for to this day from the time I was born I have never entered house or village. If I do not go, it will be a misfortune for you ; and thus I am in a dilemma.” The king replied in gentle tones,—“It is, my lord, a maxim of scripture that the great show kindness to the small ; thus mountains ever bear tiny grasses on their head ; the fathomless ocean bears on its front the floating foam, and earth on its head bears the dust.”

Dohá 171.

Thus saying and embracing his feet, the king cried,—

"Be gracious, O my lord, ever pitiful to the faithful in distress, and take this trouble on my behalf."

Chaupái 168.

Perceiving that the king was altogether under his influence, the hermit, the arch-deceiver, said,—“Hearken, O king; I tell you truly there is nothing in the world I cannot do, and as you show yourself in thought, word and action to be devoted to me, I will assuredly accomplish your object for you. The power of magical devices, penance and spells works only when secrecy is maintained. If, O king, I act as cook and serve, without any one knowing me, whoever tastes the food so prepared shall become amenable to your orders; and, further, any one who eats in their house will, I tell you, be in your power. Go now and carry out this scheme: make a vow for a whole year,

Dohá 172.

and every day entertain a new set of a hundred thousand Bráhmans with their families; while I, as long as the vow lasts, will provide the daily banquet.

Chaupái 169.

“In this way, O king, there will be very little trouble; and all the Bráhmans will be in your power. They again will perform sacrificial services, and thus the gods, too, will be easily won over. And I will give you a sign. I will not come in this dress, but by my delusive power I will bring away your family priest, and by the virtue of penance will make him look like myself and keep him here for the year; while I in his form will manage everything for you. The night is far gone, so now take rest; on the third day we will meet again. While you are asleep I, by my penitential power, will convey you home, both you and your horse.

Dohá 173.

“I will then come in the form I have told you, and you will recognize me when I call you on one side and remind you of all this.”

Chaupái 170.

The king, as ordered, retired to his couch, while the arch-deceiver took his wonted seat. Deep sleep came upon the weary king ; but what sleep for the other, distraught with care? Then came the demon Kálaketu, who was the boar that had led the king astray, a great friend of the hermit king, and skilled in manifold ways of deceit. He had a hundred sons and ten brothers, unmatched in villainy, the torment of the gods ; but they had all before this been killed in battle by the king, who saw the distress they had caused to the Bráhmans, saints and powers of heaven. The wretch, nursing this old quarrel, combined with the hermit king in devising a plot for the destruction of his enemy. The prince, overmastered by fate, knew nothing of it.

Dohá 174.

A powerful foe, even though surprised alone, is not to be lightly regarded ; to this day Ráhu, though he has nothing left but his head, is able to annoy both sun and moon.

Chaupái 171.

When the hermit king saw his ally, he rose in great joy to meet him, and told his friend the whole story. The demon was glad and said,—“Hear, O king, I am ready to settle your enemy if you will take my advice. Free yourself of all anxiety and sleep quietly here : without taking any medicine God has cured your complaint. I will sweep away the enemy, root and branch, and in four days will be back again.” Having thus cheered the hermit king, the arch-deceiver went away in his wrath, and conveyed to the palace Prátapa-bhánu still asleep, both him and his horse ; the king he put to bed beside his queen, and the horse he tied up in the stall,

Dohá 175.

Again he carried off the king's family priest, and by supernatural power depriving him of his senses, kept him in a cave in the mountain,

Chaupái 172.

While he himself assumed the priests form and went and lay down on his sumptuous couch. At daybreak the king woke and was astonished to find himself at home. Much impressed with the hermit's power, he rose and went out unperceived by the queen, and mounting his horse rode off to the wood without any of the people in the city knowing it. When it was noon he returned, and in every house there was rejoicing, with music and singing. When he saw the family priest, he looked at him in amazement, remembering the work in hand. The three days seemed like an age, so absorbed was he in expectation of the false hermit's coming. When the appointed time had come, the priest took the king and told him the whole plot.

Dohá 176.

The king was delighted to recognize the guru, and was too infatuated to have any sense left, but at once sent and invited a hundred thousand Bráhmans with their families.

Chaupái 173.

The priest superintended the cooking, and in accordance with sacred prescription concocted the six tastes in the four different ways,¹ preparing a most seductive banquet, with sauces and condiments more than any one could count. After dressing a great variety of meat, the wretch introduced into the dish some pieces of a Bráhman's flesh. He then summoned all the Bráhmans to the feast and washed their feet and politely showed them to their places. But directly they began to touch the food, a voice came from heaven,—“Up, up, all ye Bráhmans and return to your homes; though the loss be great, yet taste not the food; there is Bráhman's flesh in the dish.” Up rose all the holy men, believing the heavenly voice; while the king, distracted and out of his senses, overmastered by fate, could not utter a word.

1 The six tastes are the sweet, *madhur*; sour, *ám̐la*; salt, *lavana*; pungent, *katu*; bitter, *tikta*; and 'astringent,' *hashāya*. The four ways in which food can be taken are *bhakkshya*, by mastication; *bhojya* by deglutition; *chushya*, by sucking, and *lihya*, by lapping.

Dohá 177.

Then cried the Bráhmans in their wrath, regardless of what must follow,—“O foolish king, take birth in demon’s form, yourself and all your family.

Chaupái 174.

“O noble prince, you invited all this Bráhmanical company here simply to destroy us ; God has preserved our honour, and it is you and your race who are undone. You shall perish in the midst of your days, nor shall there be one left to offer libations to your ghost.” When the king heard the curse he was terror-stricken. Again a voice came from heaven,—“The Bráhmans have uttered this curse without due consideration, the king has committed no crime.” All the Bráhmans were astounded when they heard the heavenly voice. The king hastened to the kitchen ; there he found neither food nor Bráhman cook, and he turned away in deep thought, declared the whole history to the Bráhmans, and in his terror and distress threw himself upon the ground.

Dohá 178.

“Though you, O king, are guiltless, what is fated fails not ; the past is unalterable : a Bráhman’s curse is a terrible thing.”

Chaupái 175.

So saying, all the Bráhmans went their way. When the people of the city heard the news, they were much vexed and abused Fate, who had begun upon a swan and ended in making a crow. The demon conveyed the family priest to the palace and told the hermit all the tidings. Then the wretch despatched letters in all directions ; a host of princes came in with their troops, and with blast of trumpets beleaguered the city. Day after day there were battles of various kinds ; all his champions fell in fight, after doing valorously, and the king with his brother bit the dust. Not one of Satyaketu’s family escaped ; for a Bráhman’s curse can never fail

of accomplishment. Triumphant over their foe, the chiefs refounded the city, and then, crowned with victory, returned to their own states.

Dohá 179.

Hearken, Bharadvāja, whoever incurs the anger of heaven, for him a grain of dust becomes vast as Mount Meru, a feather like the angel of death, and every rope a snake.

Chaupái 176.

Hearken, reverend sir ; in due time this Rāja, with his family, was born as a demon with ten heads and twenty arms, a formidable hero, by name Rávan. The king's younger brother, Ari-mardan, became the valiant Kumbha-karn, while the minister Dharma-ruchi became his half-brother, the world-famous Vibhishan, the all-wise votary of Vishnu. As for the king's sons and servants, they were born a fierce demon crew ; wretches, taking various shapes at will : wicked, monstrous and devoid of knowledge ; merciless, injurious, criminal—a torment to all creation beyond what words can tell.

Dohá 180.

Though born in the incomparably pure and holy family of Pulastya, ¹ yet on account of the Bráhmans' curse all were of hateful mien.

Chaupái 177.

The three brothers practised manifold penitential observances, severe beyond all description ; the Creator drew nigh to witness them, and said,—“Son, I am well pleased, ask a boon.” The Ten-headed suppliantly clasped his feet and cried,—“Hear, O lord of earth : I would die at the hand of none save man or monkey.” Bráhma and I granted him his boon, saying,—“So be it ; you have done great penance.” Then the lord went to Kumbha-karn, and was astounded at his appearance,—“If this wretch is always eating, the whole

¹ The patr the father of Visravas ; and the latter, by three handmaids. him by Kuver, begot (1) Rávan and Kumbha-karn, (2) Vibhishan, and (3) Khara and Śūrpa-nakhá.

world will be laid waste." So he sent Sarasvati to turn his head, and he asked for six months' slumber.

Dohá 181.

Then he went to Vibhíshan and said,—“Son, ask a boon:” and he asked for perfect love of God.

Chaupái 178.

After granting these boons Bráhma departed, and they went home rejoicing. Now Maya had a daughter by name Mandodari, of exceeding beauty, a jewel of womankind, whom her father brought and made over to Rávan; and she became the demon's head-queen. Delighted at having obtained so good a wife, he next went and married his two brothers. In the middle of the ocean is a three-peaked mountain, by Bráhma's contrivance most difficult of access. Here the demon Maya had constructed a vast palace of gold and jewels, more beautiful and charming than Bhogavati, the city of the serpent kings, or Indra's capital Amaravati, and called it Lanká, a name famous throughout the world.

Dohá 182—83.

The deep ocean was its moat, washing its four sides; and its massive walls were of gold, set with jewels in a way that defies description. In every age the Demon King, whom Hari predestines, lives there with his army, as a mighty and puissant chief.

Chaupái 179.

There had dwelt great demon warriors, but all had been slain in battle by the gods; and now by Indra's commission it was occupied by a million guards of Kuver's. Rávan happened to hear of this, and at once marshalled his army and went and besieged the place. When the Yakshas saw the vast host of fierce warriors, they all fled for their lives. Thereupon Rávan inspected the whole of the city, and was so highly pleased with it that all his trouble was forgotten. Seeing that it was not only a beautiful, but also a naturally impregnable, site,

he fixed the capital there, and assigning quarters to his followers according to their several deserts, made them all quite happy. Upon one occasion he sallied forth against Kuver, and carried away his chariot of flowers as a trophy.

Dohá 184.

Again, from mere lightness of heart, he went and overthrew Kailás, and after thus testing the prowess of his men of war, waxed yet more jubilant than before.

Chaupái 180.

His happiness and prosperity, the number of his sons, his army and his allies, his conquests, his might and his superior wisdom, all grew day by day more and more, in the same way as avarice grows with gain. Thus, too, his brother, the stalwart Kumbha-karn, was a champion without a match in the world. After drinking his fill he slept for six months, and at his waking the three worlds trembled. If he had taken a meal every day the whole world would soon have been stript bare: so unspeakably staunch in fight was he that no other hero could be compared to him. His eldest son was Meghnád, who held the first place among the world's champions; before whom none could stand in the battle; who was ever harassing the city of heaven.

Dohá 185.

And many other demons were there, each by himself able to subdue the whole world, such as the hideous Kumukh, the dauntless Akampan, Kulisa-radd with teeth like thunderbolts the fiery Dhumra-ketu, and the huge Atikáya;

Chaupái 181.

Taking form at will, skilled in every kind of fraud, without ever a thought of piety or pity. One day the Ten-headed was seated in court and reviewed his innumerable retainers, sons and grandsons, friends and servants, troops of demons, more than any one could count. On seeing the host, he swelled with pride, and in fierce tones said,—“Hearken, all ye demon troops, the host of heaven are my enemies, nor dare

to stand up in open fight, but flee away at the sight of my great army. There is one way of effecting their death, which I will declare; now listen to it. Go ye and put a stop to all feasting of Bráhmans, to every sacrifice, oblation and funeral rite;

Dohá 186.

then forthwith the faint and hungry gods will come out to meet me, and whether I slay them or let them go, they will be equally in my power."

Chaupái 182.

Again he called for Meghnád and exhorted him to yet greater courage and resentment,—“The strong and warlike gods, who venture to confront you, you must vanquish and bring here in chains.” Up rose the son to perform his father’s commands. In this manner he ordered all, and himself sallied forth, club in hand. As he marched the earth shook, the heaven thundered, and pains of premature labour overtook the pregnant spouses of the gods. The gods themselves, on hearing of Rávan’s wrathful approach, sought the caves of Mount Meru. As he approached in turn each of the eight quarters of the globe, he found it deserted by its guardian. Again and again he shouted the challenge to battle and vehemently scoffed at the gods, and mad with lust of blood traversed the whole universe in search of a foeman, nor could anywhere discover one.

An interpolation.

When Nárad met him, he said with a smile,—“Saint, where are the gods? show them to me.” Nárad was not pleased to hear of his villainy, and forthwith sent him to White-land. When he crossed the ocean and arrived on the other side, he saw a company of women, and said to them,—“Go tell your husbands that the king of the demons is here; then I will conquer them in battle and take you away to my own home.” On hearing this speech an ancient dame waxed wroth and ran and seized him by the feet and threw him up

into the air; then after going a long way scratching and clawing, she gave him a good shake and pitched him with great violence into the middle of the sea.

Dohá 187.

Senseless, but by the Bráhma's blessing still alive, he sank down into hell; then with a roar sprang up again all unhurt, with a soul unmoved either by joy or sorrow.

Chaupái 183.

After taking and pillaging the Nágas' capital, the enemy of heaven passed on to Bali's realm. When the Dwarf heard of Rávan's coming and how he had scoffed at Nárad the gods' teacher, the lord infused his own strength into all the children playing in the streets, who ran and seized him and brought him into the town. While every man and woman in the place flocked to see the sight,—“Where on earth can heaven have brought such a creature from, with its twenty arms and ten heads?” Though the guards bound him and vexed him sore, he would rather die than tell his name; in the Dwarf's presence he was much confounded, and the Merciful then had him set at liberty. Off at once rushed the demon king without the least shame or hesitation.

Dohá 188—189.

Shameless, pitiless, and ever bent on mischief, the ten-headed miscreant thought to conquer Ráma. Harken, Bharadvája; if God is wroth with a man, his diamonds turn to bits of glass that are not worth a cowry.

Chaupái 184.

Where ever he found a stray god or Bráhma he frightened him into payment of ransom, and this is the way he went on day and night, the black-hearted ruffian. Then in haste he came to Pampapur, the seat of the monkey-king Báli, and beheld the beautiful lake that would charm the soul even of the greatest saint, where the monkey-king sat absorbed in contemplation. He smiled to see the Ten-headed, and Rávan shouted in a fury,—“You wretched, senseless, hypo-

critical ape, I no sooner heard your name then I came at once: have done with your cowardice and meet me in battle.

Dohá 190.

Unless you can vanquish me in combat your meditations are vain," said the demon king, gnashing his 320 teeth.

Chaupái 185.

Said Báli,—“ Away, I want no fighting: be wise and take your ten heads home. Your valour, friend, is undisputed, for I hear of your victories all over the world.” But Báli's reiterated advice had not the slightest effect; and at last the monkey-king sprang up in a rage and seized Rávan and nipped him tight under his arms, and then forgot all about him for the space of ten months. One day as he raised his hands to offer a libation to the sun, Rávan slipped out of his clutches and ran away. Next he went, being still without either shame or scruple, to where the thousand-armed Sahasrabhuj was sporting in the water.

Dohá 191.

Ocean was troubled at Rávan's might: the court began to sink, and Sahasrabáhu cried in a rage,—“ What rival of mine is here to-day?”

Chaupái 186.

Then he went and saw where Rávan stood, by whose giant arms the water was agitated. Potent in artifice as in strength of limb, he with a loud cry seized the king of Lanká and kept him tied up for some days in his stable—a sight of wonder for his wives. He was ashamed to tell his name, though the wise king was ever asking, and Rambhá and her companions danced about him and set a lighted torch to each of his ten heads. The saint Pulastya came and set him free. Next he went and got cursed by Nala.

Dohá 192.

On the road he spied a most incomparably beautiful damsel, with sandal-wood and flowers and leaves in her hand, going to worship Tripurári.

Chaupái 187.

Urvasí was abashed at seeing him, but Rávan addressed her in gentle tones,—‘Who are you lady, and where are you going?’ She was too much overcome with modesty to give him an answer. Being mad with lust, he took no heed, but seized her by the hand, though she was the wife of Kaver’s son. When he recognized her, there came upon him remorse and repentance for the evil deed,¹ and much troubled at heart the king of Lanká returned to his capital. Urvasí went sadly to Alaka and told Nala-Kúvra. In great wrath he uttered this curse,—‘May the race of Rávan perish.’ The curse went to Lanká, where Rávan was seated, and stood before him. He trembled with dismay at the sight.

Dohá 193.

Submitting to the curse, he thought within himself that he had never taken any tribute from the monks ; so in a fury,

Chaupái 188.

he sent four messengers to a holy man’s hermitage, who on seeing them forgot all about the Supreme Spirit and asked them of their welfare, saying,—‘Tell me, is all well with Lanká’s king?’ “Reverend sir, all is well with him, and he wants your tribute-money.” On hearing this speech he was much alarmed, and forgetful of his vow began to think within himself,—‘It is ill going emptyhanded to a court where justice is not, and where a pack of villains are banded together.’ So he gave them a jar, which he had filled with blood taken from his own body, and made it over to the messengers, saying,—“Go tell the king,

Dohá 194.

If the jar is opened, death will come upon you and your family.” The messengers in haste took the jar to the king’s court at Lanká.

¹ Rávan and Kaver were both sons, by different mothers, of one father, Visravas, and Urvasí was thus Rávan’s niece by marriage. Hence in violating her he had been guilty not only of adultery but also of incest.

Chaupái 189.

Rávan was pleased at the sight of the jar, and the Messengers then told him what the saint had said. On hearing the curse his heart burned within him, and he said,—“Take the jar away to the north and carefully put it in the ground where no one can find it.” They took it to Janak’s dominions and there buried it in a field. There Janak, preparing for a sacrifice, was driving a golden plough: the offspring of the saint’s blood sprung up out of the furrow and was carried off by Garur. Her blessed name was at first Jánaki, but Nárad afterwards came and directed that it should be Síta,¹ and explained all the circumstances as above related. The great saint then left: the messengers also returned to Lanká and Lanká’s lord, though worsted in four places, still greatly troubled the gods.

(Here ends the interpolation.)

The sun and moon; the wind; Varuna and Kuver; fire, time and death, and every divine power; Kinnars, saints, men, gods and serpents, all were turned out of their course. From one end of earth to the other every living creature, whether male or female, was made subject to Rávan. All in turn do his bidding and crouch suppliantly at his feet.

Dohá 195—196.

By his mighty arm he subdued the whole universe and left not a single soul independent, but acting on his own counsel exercised dominion over the whole round world. And many were the lovely dames he wedded after conquest, daughters of gods and Yakshas and Gandharvas and men and Kinnars and Nágas.

Chaupái 190.

Whatever he told Indrajit to do was done in less time than it took to tell: hear now how the other chiefs acted to whom he gave orders. The whole demon crew, villainous at heart and foul of aspect, the torment of heaven, were ready for any outrage, disguising themselves by the assumption

¹ The word *Sita* meaning *palaree*.

of various forms and acting in every way contrary to the Veda, in order to eradicate religion. Wherever they find a cow or a Bráhmaṇ, they at once set fire to the city, town or village ; pious observances are no longer anywhere in existence ; no respect is paid either to scripture, or Bráhmaṇ, or spiritual instructor ; there is no faith in Hari, no sacrifice, no prayer, nor alms-giving, and no one would ever dream of listening either to Veda or Purána.

Chhand 18.

At a hint of prayer or of penance, of sacrifice, vigil or fast,
Not a moment's rest, but he hied on its quest, with a
vow it should be the last.

The world was sunk in lawlessness ; all holy sounds
were banned ;

To read a sacred text was death, or exile from the land.

Sorathú 21.

The fearful oppression that the demons wrought is beyond description : bent on mischief, there was no limit to their evil-doing.

Chandupú 191.

The wicked all throve ; such as thieves and gamblers, and those who coveted their neighbour's wife or goods, those who honoured neither father and mother nor the gods, and those who exacted service of better men than themselves. For people who act in this way, Bhávaní, resemble demons. Seeing the general persecution of religion, earth was terror-stricken and dismayed,—‘the weight of mountains, lakes and seas is nothing so heavy as this one tyrant.’ She saw all faith perverted, and yet for fear of Rávan could say nothing. After some consideration she took the form of a cow and went to the spot where the gods and saints were gathered together, and with tears declared to them her distress. There was no help to be had from any one of them.

Chhand 19.

Gods and saints and heavenly minstrels, flocked they all
to Bráhma's throne ;

With them Earth, a horned heifer, making sad and
piteous moan.

Pondered Bráhma in his wisdom,—‘ All vain is help
of mine,

But a lord immortal is thy Lord, be he my help and thine.’

Sorathí 22.

“ Take courage, Earth,” said Bráhma, “ and remember
Hari ; the Lord knows the distress of his servants, and will
put an end to this cruel oppression.”

Chaupái 192.

All the gods sat in counsel,—“ Where can we find the
Lord and make our cry to him ? Said one,—‘ We must go to
Vaikunth’ ; said another,—‘ His home is in the ocean. Nay,
this is the way of the Lord, he is ever manifest to a faithful
and loving soul.’ Now, Girijá, I too was in the assembly
and took occasion to say briefly,—“ Hari is omnipresent
everywhere alike, but, as I well know, is revealed by love.
Tell me any place, time or quarter of the heaven where the
Lord is not. Present in all creation, animate or inanimate,
passionless and unbiased, he is revealed like fire by love.”
My words were approved by all, and Bráhma exclaimed,—
‘ Well said, well said.’

Dohí 197.

The Creator was glad at heart and thrilled with delight,
while his eyes filled with tears, and clasping his immortal
hands he thus composedly and deliberately chanted his praises :

Chhand 20—21.

“ To the King of heaven be all glory given, refuge of
creation in distress and care,

Priests and kine befriending, hell's brief triumph ending,
best beloved of Lakshmi, Ocean's daughter fair.

Heaven and earth's upholder, who, than all men bolder,
dares to scan the secret of thy strange mysterious way ?

Ever kind and loving, humble souls approving, may thy
gracious favour reach now to me, I pray.

Spirit all-pervading, fleshly sense evaling, hail Mukund
immortal, lord of blissfulness supreme,

Ever pure and holy, whom the Queen of Folly has no
power to tangle in her world-deluding dream.

Glory, glory, glory, theme of endless story, sung by
saints and sages in an ecstacy of love.

Daily, nightly gazing on the sight amazing, source of
every blessing, Hari, lord of heaven above.

Triune incarnation, who at earth's creation, wert alone
presiding, and other aid was none ;

Though in prayer unable, and my faith unstable, O great
sin-destroyer, hear our hapless moan.

Life's alarms dispelling, all disasters quelling, comfort of
the faithful, be our succour now ;

All the gods implore thee, falling low before thee, with
unfeigned submission of body, soul and vow.

Lord God Bhagavána, Ved and eke Purána, Sáradá and
Seshnág, and all the saintly throng,

Find the theme too spacious, only know thee gracious ;
hasten then to help us in our hour of wrong.

In all grace excelling, Beauty's chosen dwelling, ark on
life's dark ocean, home of all most sweet,

Gods and saints and sages, now this tempest rages, fly in
consternation to clasp thy lotus feet."

Dohá 198.

Beholding the alarm of the gods and Earth, and hearing
this devout speech, a dread voice came from heaven that remov-
ed all their doubt and anxiety,—

Chaupái 193.

"Fear not, Indra and ye saints and sages ; for your sake
I am about to assume the form of a man, with every element
of my divinity incarnate in the glorious Solar race. For the
severe penance practiced by Kasyapa and Aditi I granted
them the full boon they asked. In the form of Dasarath and
Kausalyá they shall take royal birth in the city of Kosala.
In their house shall become incarnate the four brothers, the

pride of the family of Raghu. I will fulfil all that Nárad predicted, by myself descending from heaven with my eternal spouse, and will remove the whole of earth's burden." On hearing the heavenly voice in the air the gods turned and were consoled, and Bráhma exhorted Mother Earth, who forgot her fears in hopefulness.

Dohá 199.

Then Bráhma proceeded to his own realm after thus instructing the gods,—‘Go and worship Hari upon earth in form as monkeys.’

Chaupá 194.

The gods went every one to his own abode, and with Earth had rest. All the orders that Bráhma had given they executed gladly and without delay. Taking birth on earth as monkeys of incomparable strength and dignity, warriors with rocks and trees and claws for weapons, they confidently awaited Hari's coming, swarming in every mountain and forest and divided among themselves into orderly troops, I have told you of their noble acts, and now you must hear of what was doing meanwhile elsewhere. The king of Avadh was named Dasarath, the jewel of the line of Raghu, well skilled in the Vedas, virtuous and wise, a defender of the faith, a sincere votary of Vishnu.

Dohá 200.

Kausalyá and his other loving queens were all of holy life, faithful and affectionate to their lord, and full of humble devotion to Hari's lotus feet.

Chaupá 195.

One day the king was sad that he had no son, and going in haste to his guru's abode fell at his feet with many entreaties and told him all his joys and sorrows. Vasishta in reply comforted him in every way,—“Take courage, you will have four sons, who will be famous throughout the three worlds and rid the faithful of all their fears.” Then Vasishta summoned Saint Sringi to perform a sacrifice for the birth of

a son. The saint devoutly offered the oblation, and the fire-god appeared with the offering in his hand and cried in gracious tones,—“I am pleased more than I can say ; whatever Vasishta has imagined in his heart is all granted for your good. Take this oblation, O king, and divide it in such proportions as is proper.

Dohá 201.

Then the fire-god vanished, after telling them all of all that had to be done. The king was transported with ecstasy and could not contain himself for joy.

Chaupái 196.

He at once sent for his loving wives, and Kausalyá and the others came. To Kausalyá he gave a half share, and of the remaining half he made two portions, one of which he offered to Kaikeyi ; what remained he again divided into two, which he placed in the hands of Kausalyá and Kaikeyi, and they gave them to Sumitrá, to her great delight. In this manner all the queens became pregnant, and they grew glad of heart with exceeding joy. From the day that Hari was conceived in their womb the whole world was fulfilled with happiness and prosperity, and the queens shone resplendent in the palace, full of beauty, virtue and glory. Some little time was thus happily spent, till the day arrived for the Lord to be revealed.

Dohá 202.

Auspicious was the conjunction of the planets in an auspicious house ; auspicious the moment ; auspicious the day of the week and of the month ; and full of delight was all creation, animate and inanimate, when Ráma, father of de lights, was born.

Chaupái 197.

On the ninth day of the sweet and holy month of Chait ; in the bright lunar fortnight ; under Abhijit, his favourite constellation ; on a seasonable day neither hot nor cold, a holy time of rest for all ; with soft, cool, fragrant breezes blowing ;

midst the delight of gods and heartfelt rapture of the saints; while the woods were full of blossoms as the hills with gems, and every river flowed a stream of nectar. When the Creator saw the time so fit, all the gods had their chariots equipped and came forth. The bright heaven was crowded with the host of them; troops of Gandharvas chanted heroic lays; flowers were rained down by handfuls; the sky resounded with the beat of kettledrums; serpents, saints and gods hymned his praises, and each in his own fashion tendered him service.

Dohá 203.

Thus meekly did all the gods return to their several abodes when the Lord was revealed, who is the abode of the world, and in whom all the world finds rest.

Chhand 24—27.

From Kausalyá's blessed womb the great god at last has come, in response to a lost world's plaint,

And she gazes with what joy on the face of her dear boy, that would rapture the soul of a saint.

A vision of delight, with his eyes so large and bright, and his body as a cloud dark and grand,

By the garland on his breast and his four arms confest Kharári, with a weapon in each hand.

With fingers locked in prayer she cries,—“How may I dare, O lord god immortal, thy boundless praise to tell,

Far above the world's confusion and reason's vain intrusion, whom all the scriptures witness incomprehensible.

Whom saints and holy sages have hymned through all the ages, the fountain of compassion, the source of every grace.

Who aye with Lakshmi reignest, thou, even thou, now deignest to be my son and succour thy sore-tried chosen race.

Though we know by revelation, heaven and earth and all creation, in each hair upon thy body may be found,

In my arms thou sweetly dreamest, O mystery supremest, far beyond the comprehension of a sage the most profound.”

Smiled the lord at her devotion and would fain have set in motion the magic that dazzles the crowd,

Telling all he had done and the triumphs he had won that his mother of her son might be proud.

But hurriedly she cried,—“My soul is terrified by these marvels, disperse them from my sight ;

Let me see thee as a child, disporting free and wild, for in this is my greatest delight.”

She spoke and he obeyed, and at once in fashion made as an infant began to cry.

Know that all who sing this lay, and in faith to Hari pray, shall in peace rest for ever when they die.

Dohá 204.

For the sake of Bráhmans, cows and gods and saints he took birth as a man, in a body formed at his own will, he who is beyond all form, or quality, or perception of the senses.

Chaupái 198.

On hearing the delightful sound of a baby's cries, all the queens came greatly agitated; their glad handmaids ran hither and thither and all the people of the city were drowned in joy. When Dasarath knew he had a son born, his joy was like that of the blest in heaven; with his soul full of love and his body quivering with delight he sought to rise, but could not till he had collected himself,—“The lord, whose very name it is bliss to hear, has come to my house.” Thus rejoicing at heart the king sent for minstrels to play, and next summoned the *guru* Vasishtha, who came to the court with a train of Bráhmans. He went and gazed upon the peerless babe, but its beauty and grace were beyond words to tell.

Dohá 205.

Then after performing the *Nándi-mukh Sráddh*¹ he completed every caste observance, and the king made offerings to the Bráhmans of gold, cows, plate and jewels.

Chaupái 199.

The city was full of flags and banners and festal wreaths arranged in a manner that defies description.

¹ The *Nándi-mukh Sráddh* is a preliminary offering to the Manes preliminary to any joyous occasion, such as a birth, marriage, &c., in which nine balls of meat are offered to the deceased father, grandfather, and great-grandfather; to the maternal grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather; and to the mother, paternal grandmother, and paternal great-grandmother.—*Monier Williams*.

Showers of flowers fell from heaven and every soul was rapt in bliss. There was a concourse of troops of women who had come running in their ordinary dress just as they were at the time, with golden vases and salvers laden with things of good omen, singing as they entered the king's court. After passing their offerings round and round over the child's head, they strew them on the ground, and again and again throw themselves at his feet, while bards and minstrels, singing men and choristers chant the solemn praises of Raghunáth. Every one made an offering of all that he had, and no one kept what was given him; while musk, sandal and saffron were thrown about in such profusion that the streets were muddy with perfumes.

Dohá 206.

In every house there was music and the jubilant shout,—
 "The fountain of joy has been revealed;" and all the men and women in the city were rejoicing everywhere.

Chaupái 200.

Both Kaikeyi and Sumitra too gave birth to a lovely boy. At that time the joy, the auspiciousness, and the crowds were more than Sarasvati or the serpent king could describe. The city of Avadh was as resplendent as it were Night going to meet her lord. The sun, abashed at the vision, faded into twilight, where the dusky clouds of incense were shot through with red gleams of *abér*: the piles of jewels in the temples were like stars, and the golden pinnacle of the palace as the gracious moon, while the murmuring sound of the muttered Veda in the house was like the evening song of garrulous birds. Gazing upon the spectacle the sun forgot himself, and a whole month passed without his knowing it.

Dohá 207.

The day was a month long, but the marvel was noticed of none—while the sun in his chariot stood still at gaze, how could there be any night?

Chaupái 201.

There was not one who observed the strange event, and at last the sun set still chanting Ráma's praises. The gods, saints and Nágas too, who had witnessed the spectacle, returned home, congratulating themselves on their good fortune. I will even tell you of a deception I practised myself: Hearken, Girijá, for I know your steadfast faith. Kákabhhusundi and I were there together in human form, without any one knowing it. Full of rapture, love and delight, we roamed about the streets in ecstasie unconsciousness. Only one on whom rests the mercy of Ráma can attain to the knowledge of these acts of ours. At that time the king granted every one his heart's desire, whatever it might be that he had come for, bestowing on them elephants, carriages, horses, gold, cows, jewels and all sorts of apparel.

Dohá 208.

All were satisfied from their very heart and invoked blessings upon him, saying,—‘May all the boys live long,’ those lords of Tulsi Dás.

Chaupái 202.

In this manner some days were spent, without any one taking thought of noon or night, till the king, knowing the time had come for naming the children, sent and called the wise seer, and after reverently greeting him thus spake,—“Holy father, be pleased to declare the names upon which you have secretly determined.” “Their names are many and wonderful; I will tell them, O king, to the best of my ability. The store-house of delights, the ocean of joy, by whose spray three worlds are gladdened, the very home of bliss, the Comforter of the universe, has for his name RAMA (‘delight’). The bearer and supporter of the world is named Bharat (‘the supporter’), while he whose very thought brings victory over the foe is celebrated in the Veda by his name Satrugna (‘destroyer of enemies’).”

Dohá 209.

For the auspicious, the beloved of Ráma, the stay of the whole world, was reserved by Saint Vasishtha the noble name of Lakshman ('of auspicious appearance').

Chaupái 203.

After naming them the saint pondered in heart and said,—“O king, your four sons are the very Veda itself; the saint's treasure; the believer's all in all; the darling of Siva, who is delighted with their childish sports.” Even from his earliest days Lakshman knew his dear lord and devoted himself to Ráma; while the affection of the two other brothers, Bharat and Satrugbha, grew also as between master and servant. In both couples one was dark, the other fair; and their mother, as she gazed upon their loveliness, would break a blade of grass to avert the evil eye. Though all four were full of amiability, beauty and intellect, yet Ráma was a higher joy; his kindness of heart was like the bright moon, which manifested itself in the radiance of a most winning smile; while now in the cradle, and now on her lap his mother fondled him and called him her own dear darling.

Dohá 210.

The omnipresent god, who has neither passion nor quality, nor sensation of pleasure, and who is from everlasting, lay a babe in Kausalya's arms, overcome by devout affection.

Chaupái 204.

With all the beauty of a myriad loves; dark of hue as the lotus or a heavy rain-cloud; the glistening nails on his rosy feet like clustered pearls on the leaves of the lily; the print of the thunderbolt, the flag and the elephant-goad distinctly to be seen; the tinkling of his anklets enough to charm a saint; with girdled waist and dimpled body and deep navel, such as no one could believe who had not seen; with long arms covered with many jewels and lovely set of tiger's claws upon his breast; with necklace of gems and sparkling amulet, and soul-ravishing print of the Bráhma's

feet¹ ; with shell-marked neck and exquisite chin, and a face flushed with the beauty of all the loves ; with well-matched teeth and ruddy lips and nose and forehead-mark beyond description ; with beautiful ears and charming cheeks and lisping prattle most delightful to hear ; with eyes dark and full as the lotus, and heavy brows and a fair pendant on his forehead ; with lustrous curling hair that his mother was ever delighting to stroke ; with his body clothed in little yellow drawers, crawling on knees and hands upon the ground ; neither scripture nor Seshnág could do justice to his beauty, nor without a vision could any one imagine it.

Dohá 211.

The all-blissful god, who is above the reach of delusion and transcends all intellect, speech and perception of the senses, became subject to the strong love of his parents and sported like an innocent babe.

Chaupái 205.

In this way Ráma, the father of the universe, showed himself the delight of the people of Kosala ; and they who love their god, O Bhaváni, show themselves like his earthly parents. But his enemies, though they struggle for ever, will never extricate themselves from the bonds of existence. The delusive power that has subdued all life, whether in animate or inanimate creation, trembles before the Lord, who with the play of his eyebrows forces it to dance like a puppet. If we leave such a Lord, whom else can we supplicate? Neither in thought, word nor deed be overwise ; god is merciful

¹ Rama is here identified with Vishnu, of whom the following legend is told in the *Bhágavat Purána* :—The patriarch Bhrigu, being in doubt which of the three gods, Bráhma, Vishnu or Siva, was the greatest, determined to put the matter to the test. He first went to Bráhma and entered his court without making any obeisance, an affront at which the god showed himself exceedingly indignant. He then went to Siva and, treating him with a like want of respect, excited a yet more furious storm of passion. Lastly he went to Vaikunth, where finding Vishnu asleep in the embraces of his spouse Lakshmi, he struck him roughly on the breast with his foot to awaken him. The god started up, but seeing the saint at once prostrated himself before him, and took and gently rubbed his foot with his hands, hoping it had not been hurt by striking against him. Thus Bhrigu learnt that in mercy and magnanimity, the highest attributes of the godhead, there was no other power that could be compared to Vishnu.

only to those who pray. Thus the Lord sported as a child, to the delight of all the people of the city ; and now his mother would take and dandle him in her arms, and now put him down and rock him in his cradle.

Dohá 212.

So lost in love that day and night succeeded one another unobserved, while in her fondness for her boy she kept singing to him nursery songs,

Chaupái 206.

One day his mother, after washing and dressing him, put him to sleep in his cradle, and prepared an offering for presentation to her patron divinity. When the service was over and she had made her oblation, she returned to the place where she had dressed the food ; but when she came there she beheld Ráma in the act of eating. In a great fright she ran to the nursery and there found the child again sleeping ; but coming back once more she still saw the boy. Then she trembled and was much disturbed in mind, for she saw two children, one here and one there and was utterly bewildered ; saying,—‘Are my senses at fault, or is this a miracle?’ When Ráma saw his mother’s distress, he broke out into a merry laugh,

Dohá 213.

and exhibited to her his whole marvellous form ; with a myriad worlds gleaming on each individual hair of his body ;

Chaupái 207.

With unnumbered suns and moons, Sivas and Bráhmas ; with many mountains, rivers, oceans, lands and forests ; with time, fate, merit, demerit nature and every power there manifested, even though unknown by name. When she beheld the awful vision she stood terror-stricken, with hands clasped in prayer ; for she saw both the life which Máya sets in motion and the faith that sets it free. With quivering body and speechless mouth she closed her eyes and bowed her head at his feet. Seeing his mother thus overpowered with amaze-

ment, Ráma again assumed the form of a child. But her terror left her not, while she hymned his praises, saying,—‘I have regarded the great father as my own offspring.’ Again and again Hari exhorted his mother,—‘See, my mother, that you tell this to no one;’

Dohá 214.

and as often did Kausalyá meekly reply with clasped hands,—‘See you too, my lord, that the delusive power of yours never again visits me,’

Chaupái 208.

Hari indulged in every kind of childish amusement, to the great delight of his attendants ; and after a little time all the brothers grew to be big boys, gladdening every one about them. Then the guru came to perform the tonsure and again the Bráhmans received large offerings. The four lads run about and divert themselves in all sorts of pretty ways ; and the lord, whose thoughts, works and acts transcend every human sense, plays in Dasarath’s court-yard. If the king when at dinner called him, he would not leave his play-mates and come, till Kausalyá herself went for him, when he would toddle along with her as fast as he could. He whom the scripture declares to be incomprehensible, of whom Siva could find no end, is picked up by his mother and carried off in a pet, and his father with a smile takes him in his lap, though grimy all over with dust.

Dohá 215.

Quickly glancing here and there during the meal, as soon as he got a chance, he would run away with a scream of delight, stuffing his mouth full of rice and curds.

Chaupái 209.

His pretty innocent childish sports have been sung by Sarasvati, Seshnág Sambhu and the Vedas, and he whose soul does not warm to them has been brought into the world by God to no purpose. When the brothers were all grown up, the guru and their father and mother invested them with

the sacred thread, and Rāma went to his guru's house to study. In a short time he mastered all knowledge. The four Vedas are but the breath of his mouth, and for him to study was a joke indeed. When they were proficient in scholarship and politeness and morality they began to practise all princely sports. With bow and arrow in hand they showed so fair that all creation was ravished at the sight, and as the brothers passed along the road every man and woman stopt to gaze at them.

Dohā 216.

Rāma was gracious to all ; and not a soul in Kosala, man or woman, young or old, but held him dearer than life.

Chaupāī 210.

Taking his brother with him as a companion, he would go to the forest to hunt ; there selecting for death the noblest game, he every day brought and showed it to the king ; and each beast, slain by his shaft, after death went straight to heaven. Taking his meals in company with his younger brother, ever obedient to his parents' commands, the gracious god omitted nothing that could please the people. He gave his mind to hear the Vedas and Purānas and then himself taught his brother. Rising at break of day, he first saluted his parents and the priest, and then, after obtaining their sanction, busied himself with work in the city. The king was glad of heart when he saw his mode of life.

Dohā 217.

The all-pervading, indivisible, passionless, eternal God, who is without attributes, or name, or form, performs many wonders for the sake of his faithful people.

Chaupāī 211.

I have now sung all these his doings ; hearken attentively to the remainder of my story. The great and wise saint Visvamitra had chosen a fair hermitage in the forest, where he gave himself up to prayer, sacrifice and meditation. The demons Maricha and Subāhu, on beholding the preparations

for sacrifice, feared greatly and hastened to disturb them. The saintly son of Gádhi was pained and full of thought,—‘There is no killing these accursed demons without Hari.’ Then he reflected,—“The Lord has become incarnate to relieve earth of its burdens. I have now an excuse for going to visit him and after entreaty made will bring back with me the two brothers. Now I will feast my eyes with the sight of him who is the abode of all knowledge, piety and goodness.”

Dohá 218.

His manifold longing brooked no delay on the road, and after bathing in the stream of the Sarju he proceeded to the king's court.

Chaupái 212.

When the Rája heard of the saint's arrival, he went to meet him with a retinue of Bráhmans, and prostrating himself reverently on the ground before him took and seated him on his own throne : then laved his feet and offered him religious honours, saying,—“There is no one so blest as I am to-day;” and had various kinds of food prepared for him. The great saint was highly pleased. Next, the king brought his four sons into the presence. On seeing Ráma the saint forgot his detachment from the world and was as enraptured with his lovely face as is the *chakor* with the full moon. Then said the glad king,—“Reverend sir, this favour is unparalleled ; what is the cause of your coming ? Tell me, and I will not delay to accomplish it.” “There is a crew of demons that trouble me, and I am come to you, O king, with a request. Let me have Raghunáth and his brothers ; the demons' death is all I desire.

Dohá 219.

Give them, O king, gladly, without any selfish folly ; for you it will be a meritorious and honourable act, and it will also turn out well for them.”

Chaupái 213.

When the king heard this cruel request, his heart beat

fast and all the brightness of his face grew dim,—“In my old age I have begotten four sons ; O sir, you have spoken without consideration. Ask of me land, cattle, goods and treasure, and I will gladly give you all I have, at once. Nothing is dearer than the life of the body ; but even that I would give in a minute, All my sons are dear to me as my own soul and, O sir, I cannot spare you Rāma. What is this pretty little boy of mine against a fierce and terrible demon ?” On hearing the king’s word so fraught with love, the wise saint was glad of heart. Then Vasishtha much exhorted him, and the king’s doubts were dispelled. Obediently he sent for the two boys and pressed them to his heart and fervently exclaimed,—“My two boys are my very life ; but you, holy sir, are now their only father.”

Dohá 220.

The king consigned the boys to the saint, again and again blessing them. Then they went to their mother’s apartment and bowed the head at her feet.

Sorathá 23.

Glad to relieve the saint of his alarm, the two lion-hearted heroes set forth, oceans of compassion, resolute of purpose, the whole world’s champions.

Chaupái 214.

Bright-eyed, broad-chested, long of arm, dark of hue as the lotus or the tamál tree ; with quiver at side pendent from a yellow sash, and in either hand arrows and a comely bow, so marched the two brothers, one dark, the other fair, the treasure that Visvamitra had acquired,—“I recognize the lord god Bráhmánya-deva¹ in the child who thus on my account has left his own father.” So thought the saint ; and as he went he pointed out Táraká, who on hearing his voice rushed up in a fury. With a single arrow Hari took her life, but recognizing her submission gave her a place in his own heaven. Then the saint knew he had found his lord, but yet instructed him, the all-wise. As they travelled they felt

¹ Bráhmánya-deva is one of the epithets of Vishnu.

neither hunger nor thirst; such their incomparable strength of body and glorious vigour.

Dohá 221.

After taking the Lord to his own hermitage, he made over to him every kind of weapon, and gave him herbs and roots and fruit to eat, knowing him to be ever gracious to men of holy life.

Chaupái 215.

At daybreak Raghurái said to him,—“Go and make ready the sacrifice, and fear not.” The brotherhood began preparing the oblation, while he remained to guard the sacrificial fire. On hearing of this, the demon Márícha rushed up in a fury with his army to disturb the saint. Ráma smote him with a headless shaft, and he fell a hundred leagues the other side of ocean. Then he slew Subáhu with an arrow of fire, while his brother routed the whole demon host. When they had thus slain the demons and restored peace to the Bráhmans, the whole company of gods and saints began to hymn their praise. There Raghurái then stayed a few days and showed kindness to the hermits, who devoutly repeated to him many legends of the Puránas, though he knew them all before. Then the saint respectfully informed him,—“There is a sight, my lord, which is worth your going to see.” When Raghunáth heard of the ordeal of the bow, he gladly accompanied the noble sage. On the way he spied a hermitage without bird, deer, or any living creature near it, and observing a remarkable stone inquired of the saint about it, who in reply gave him the whole history.

Dohá 222.

“Gautama’s wife was by a curse turned into a hard rock, and is now longing for the dust of your lotus feet : O Raghubír, show mercy upon her.”

Chhand 28—31.

At the touch so sweet of his hallowed feet, she awoke from her long unrest,

And meekly adored her sovereign lord, awaiting his high behest.

With speechless tongue, limbs all unstrung, and eyes that streamed with tears,

She fell at his feet in rapture meet, far blest above all her peers.

Then bolder grown by the favour shown with a faith that himself had given,

She dared to raise her hymn of praise,—“Great Spirit, high lord of heaven,

Save me, O save, thy succour I crave, holy god, sinful wretch though I be,

Rávan’s conquering foe, joy of all else below, who toil upon life’s troubled sea.

Though the saint cursed me sore in the ill days of yore, now I hold it a blessing most sweet,

For my own eyes have seen my Redeemer, and I ween Siva only my rapture could mete.

Witless and weak, one only boon I seek ; as the bee within the lotus loves to stay,

May my soul upon thy feet, O my god, I thee entreat, dwell in rapture never ending night and day :

Holy feet, the adoration of the lord of all creation, and source of the stream divine,

Which on Siva’s head descended, this day have condescended to rest and on this vile head of mine.”

Thus full of jubilation, with oft-renewed prostration, did Gautama’s long lost bride,

With the boon she most had craved, thus graciously vouchsafed, return to her husband’s side.

Dohá 223.

Thus the benevolent lord Hari is compassionate beyond our deserts, Worship him, says poor Tulsi Dás, and cease from all wrangling and hypocrisy.

Chaupái 216.

Ráma and Lakshman accompanied the saint to the world-purifying Ganges. Both the lord and his younger brother reverently saluted it, and Ráma was delighted beyond measure, as the son of Gádhi told him the legend how the

heavenly stream had come down upon earth. Then the Lord and the hermits performed their ablutions and the Bráhmans received manifold gifts. The hermits' champion went on his way rejoicing, and quickly, drew near to the capital of Videha. When Ráma beheld the beauty of the city, he and his brother were delighted at the many ponds and wells and rivers and streams, with water of ambrosial purity and jewelled flights of steps; where the hum of bees, drunk with nectar, made a delicious sound and birds of all kinds were softly cooing: as the lilies expanded their many-coloured petals, and a cool, soft, fragrant breeze was ever delightful.

Dohá 224.

On all four sides the city was bright with flower-gardens, orchards and groves, the haunt of innumerable birds and full of fruit and flowers and verdure.

Chaupái 217.

The beauty of the city is not to be told; wherever one went there was something to charm the soul. Handsome bazárs and gorgeous balconies all studded with jewels, as though the Creator had fashioned them with his own hand; thriving bankers and traders, very Kuvers of wealth, sitting with all their various goods displayed; fine squares and beautiful streets, that were constantly sprinkled with fragrant waters; magnificent temples to all the gods, as bright as if they had been painted by Kámadeva himself; all the people of the city, both men and women, prosperous, well-dressed, virtuous, pious, intelligent and accomplished. But Janak's palace was such a masterpiece that the gods tired themselves with looking at it, and the mind was quite overcome by the sight of the Fort, for it seemed to have appropriated to itself all that was most beautiful in the world.

Dohá 225.

With glistening white walls and doors of gold with gems set in different devices, the exquisite mansion where Síta lived was far too lovely for words to describe.

Chandī 218.

All the city gates were most massive with panels of adamant, and were thronged with princes and their retinues of mimists, bards and heralds. The vast and well-built stables were at all hours of the day crowded with horses, elephants and chariots: and the ministers, generals and warriors all had residences in the same style as the king. Outside the city, by pool and stream, the multitudinous princes had pitched their different camps. On seeing a fine mango grove, a most agreeable and convenient spot, the descendant of Kusika exclaimed,—“This is just what I like; let us stay here, Raghubir.” “Very well my lord,” answered the gracious god; and there they alighted with all their hermit train. When the king of Mithilā heard the news that the great saint Visvamitra was come—

Dohā 223.

taking with him his ministers and many gallant fighting men and noble Brāhmanas and the chief of his kinsmen,¹ in this fashion the king went forth rejoicing to meet the prince of sages.

Chandī 219.

Bowing to the ground, he made obeisance, and the saint gladly gave him his blessing. Then the king respectfully saluted all the hermit train and congratulated himself on his good fortune. After making many inquiries as to his health and welfare, Visvamitra led the king to a seat, and at that very time arrived the two brothers who had gone to see the garden, one dark, the other fair, in childhood's tender bloom, the joy of all beholder's ravishing, the senses of the whole world. When Raghubati came, all rose and Visvamitra seated him by his side. All were charmed at the sight of the two brothers; their eyes filled with tears and their body thrilled

¹ The words rendered, ‘the chief of his kinsmen,’ may also be taken to mean ‘his guru (Satānand) and his kinsmen.’

with rapture, and the king especially was beside himself with joy¹ on beholding their sweet and lovely appearance.

Dohá 227.

Though feeling himself overpowered with love, the king discreetly restrained himself, and bowing his head at the saint's feet, said in suppressed accents choking with emotion—

Chaupái 220.

“Tell me, my lord, who are these two lovely children. Are they the glory of a saintly family, or the bulwarks of a kingly line? or are they the twofold manifestation² of the Supreme Spirit, whom scripture declares to be unutterable. My mind, ordinarily free from wordly attachment, wearies itself with gazing upon them, as the *chakor* in gazing upon the moon. Therefore, sir, I beg you to tell me the truth and to conceal nothing. My love grows with looking, and my soul perforce is withdrawn from divine contemplation.” Said the saint with a smile,—“You have spoken well, O king; your word is always true; there is not a living creature that does not love these boys.” Ráma smiled to himself on hearing this. “They are the sons of Dasarath, the glory of the line of Raghu, and the king has sent them to help me.

Dohá 228.

Ráma and Lakshman by name, these two brothers, as strong as they are good and beautiful, with their companions, protected my sacrifice and vanquished all the demons in battle.”

Chaupái 221.

Said the king,—“O saint, when I behold your feet I cannot tell how richly I am rewarded for any former good deeds. And these pretty twins have conferred a happiness

¹ This line, *Bhayan Vidha vidha bisekhi*, contains a play upon words which cannot be preserved in a translation. A literal rendering would be : particular Vidha (*i.e.*, Janak, the king of Videha) became really *videha* (*i.e.*, without a body).

² The two manifestations are *nirgan* and *sagan*, the bodiless and the embodied.

upon you, the supremely happy. Their innocent mutual affection is indescribable in words ; a delight to the inmost soul. Hear me, sir, cried the king in his rapture, it is like the natural union between the universal soul and the soul of man." Again and again the king gazed upon the Lord with quivering body and heart bursting with emotion. Then with courteous phrase and bowed head he escorted the saint to the city and there assigned him apartments, which were bright and cheerful at all times of the day ; and finally, after further homage and proffers of service, the king took his leave and returned to the palace.

Dohá 229.

When Ráma and the hermits had taken food and rested a little, he went and sat down by his brother's side : now it still wanted an hour to sunset,

Chaupái 222.

and Lakshman had at heart a great longing to go and see Janak's city ; but again, for fear of his brother and respect for the saint, he said nothing out loud, but was smiling to himself. Ráma understood what was passing in his mind, and being ever considerate to his followers was glad and, with a most modest and submissive smile, after begging permission of his *guru* to speak, said,—“ Sir, Lakshman wishes to see the city, but out of respect for you is afraid to speak. If you will allow me, I will show him the place and quickly bring him back again.” The saint replied most affectionately,—“ O Ráma how can you do aught but good ; the guardian of the bridge of religion, the loving benefactor of all faithful servants ?

Dohá 230.

Go, blessed pair of brothers, and see the city ; gladden the eyes of all the people by the sight of your beauty.”

Chaupái 223.

After bowing at the saint's feet they went, these two brothers, the delight of the eyes of the whole world. When

the children in the market-place saw their exceeding beauty, their eyes and their very soul fastened greedily upon them. Clad in yellow apparel, with belt and quiver at their side, with graceful bow and arrows in hand, a lovely pair, one dark, the other fair of hue, with sandalwood *tilak* to match their complexion; with lion-like waist and long arms, and breast adorned with strings of elephant pearls, with shapely ears and lotus-eyes, and moonlike face to assuage the three kinds of pain; with golden flowers for earrings, so beautiful as to steal the heart of every beholder; with a bewitching glance and fair arched eyebrows, and a star on the forehead that seemed beauty's own stamp;

Dohá 231.

With jaunty cap on comely head, with black curly locks the two brothers were all-beautiful from head to foot and exquisite in every part.

Chaupáí 224.

When the citizens heard that the princes were come to see the town, they all left their business and started off like beggars to pillage a treasury. When they beheld the easy grace of the two brothers they were glad indeed, and their eyes were rewarded. The maidens peeping from the windows of the houses at once fell in love with Ráma's beauty, and in amorous strain addressed one another,—“They surpass in beauty a thousand loves: neither among gods, nor men, nor demons, nor serpents, nor deified saints has beauty such as theirs ever been heard of. As for Vishnu with his four arms, Bráhma with his four heads, and Purári with his five faces and wondrous attire, and all the other gods, there is not one in the whole universe whose beauty, my friend, can be compared to theirs.

Dohá 232.

Of tender age, the very home of beauty, equally love'y whether dark or fair, as though a myriad loves had been lavished on each individual limb of their body:

Chaupái 225.

Tell me, friend, is there any one in human form who would not be charmed at the sight of such beauty?" Said one in gentle loving tones,—“Hear, my dear, what I have been told. This pretty pair of young cygnets are the two sons of King Dasarath. They have protected the sacrifice of Saint Visvamisra and slain in battle the invincible demons. The lovely child with dark complexion and lotus eyes, who quelled the pride of Mārīcha and Subāhu and bears the bow and arrows in his hand, is the sweet son of Kausalyā, by name Rāma. The fair youth in gallant attire, who also has bow and arrows in hand and follows Rāma, is named Lakshman and is his younger brother. Sumitrā, you must know, is his mother.

Dohá 233.

After befriending the Bráhmans, and on the roal setting free the sage's wife, the two brothers have come here to see the tournament.” On hearing this all the ladies were delighted.

Chaupái 226.

Said one, after regarding Rāma's beauty,—“Here is a bridegroom worthy of Jánaki. If the king does but see him, he will abjure his vow and insist upon a marriage with them.” Said another,—“The king knows who they are and has received both them and the saint, with all honour. He has not, however, gone back from his vow, but mastered by fate persists in his folly.” Said another,—“If God is good and is certain to reward every man according to his deserts, then here is the bridegroom Jánaki will wed. About this, my dear, there can be no doubt. When such a union is brought about by destiny, every one will be satisfied. O friend, I am deeply moved by the thought that if this marriage takes place he will come again some time ;

Dohá 234.

otherwise there is no chance of my seeing him ; it is only a

long accumulation of merit in previous existences that is rewarded by such intercourse."

Chaupái 227.

Said another,—“Friend, you have spoken well ; this is a marriage that will please every one.” Said another,—“Siva’s bow is hard to bend, and this dark lad is of delicate frame ; it is really a most unfair test.” Hearing this, another soft-voiced maiden said,—“I have once and again heard say of them that though slight in appearance their strength is great. Touched by the dust of his lotus feet, the guilty Ahalya attained salvation : and he will never rest till he has broken the bow ; this is a belief out of which I am no-how to be cheated. When the Creator fashioned Síta, he predestined for her this dark-complexioned ‘bridegroom.’” On hearing these words all were glad and softly exclaimed,—“May it indeed prove so.”

Dohá 235,

In their gladness of heart the bevy of fair-faced bright-eyed dames shower down flowers, and wherever the two brothers went there was all the joy of heaven.

Chaupái 228.

Now they reached the eastern quarter of the city, where the lists had been prepared for the tournament. In the midst of a fair and spacious paved area a spotless altar had been gorgeously adorned, with a broad golden platform all around for the reception of the princes, and close behind another circular tier for the spectators, of somewhat greater height and elegantly decorated, where all the people of the city might come and sit. Close to this was another large and beautiful gallery of glistening white, painted in diverse colours, whence ladies might view the spectacle with due decorum, according to their family rank. The children politely show the two lords all the preparations, and with pleasant voice keep telling them what this is and that is ;

Dohá 236.

thus, in their affection, finding a pretext for frequently touching their lovely person ; while they thrill all over with delight as again and again they gaze on the twin brothers.

Chaupái 229.

When they perceived that Ráma was won by their devotion, they lovingly explain the different places, each according to his own fancy calling away the two brothers, who in their kindness are ever ready to come. Ráma shows Lakshman everything, still talking in light and merry tone ; and he, in obedience to whose fiat Maya in a moment of time created the entire universe, out of compassion to his faithful people, feigns amazement at the sight of a tourney ground. When they had seen all the show, they returned to their guru in alarm at being so late : and he, by whose awe Terror itself is dismayed, thus manifests the transcendant virtue of devotion. With many kind and courteous phrases they reluctantly take leave of the children ;

Dohá 237.

and meekly and submissively, with mingled awe and love, they bow the head at the guru's feet : nor sit down till they obtain his permission.

Chaupái 230.

When it was dusk the saint gave the word, and all performed their evening devotions, and in the recital of sacred legends spent two watches of the solemn night. Then the saint retired to his couch, and the two brothers began to shampoo his feet ; they whose lotus feet the holiest of men longing to behold practise all kinds of penance and meditation, even they, these two brothers, mastered by love, affectionately shampooed their master's lotus feet. At last when the saint had so ordered again and again, Ráma himself retired to rest, while Lakshman pressed his feet to his heart and reverently caressed them with emotions of exquisite delight. Again and

again the Lord said,—‘Sleep, my brother,’ and at last he laid himself down, but with the divine feet still in his lap.

Dohá 238.

When the night was spent, at the first sound of cock-crow Lakshman arose ; and next, before the saint, woke the lord of the universe, the all-wise Ráma.

Chaupái 231.

After performing all the customary acts of purification and going to bathe, they bowed before the guru, and by his permission went out to gather flowers, as befitted the time. As they went they spied a beautiful garden of the king’s, where reigned perpetual Spring, planted with ornamental trees of every kind, and overhung with many coloured creepers, so rich in bud and fruit and flower that in its abundance it put to shame even the trees of paradise ; while the peacocks danced responsive to the music made by the feathered choir of *chátuk*, *koil*, parrot and *chakor*. In the midst of the garden a lovely lake shone bright with jewelled steps of varied design : its pure expanse gladdened with many-coloured lotuses and the cooing of water-birds and the hum of bees.

Dohá 239.

Both the lord and his brother were delighted at the sight of the lake and the garden. What a charming pleasure must that have been which pleased even Ráma.

Chaupái 232.

After looking all about and asking leave of the gardeners they began in high glee to gather leaves and flowers. At that very time Síta too came there, having been sent by her mother to visit the shrine of Girijá. With her came all her young and lovely companions, singing glad songs. Now Girijá’s shrine was close to the lake, beautiful beyond description, the delight of all beholders. When she and her attendants had bathed in the pool, she approached the goddess with a glad heart, and after adoration paid with much devotion

begged of her a handsome and well-matched bridegroom. One of her attendant damsels, who had strayed away to look at the garden, chanced to see the two brothers and returned to Sita quite love-smitten.

Dohá 240.

When her companions observed what a state she was in, her body all in a tremble and her eyes full of tears, they asked in gentle tones,—‘Declare the cause of this rapture.’

Chutupú 233.

“There have come to see the garden two princes of tender age and charming in every way; one dark of hue, the other fair, but how can I describe them? Voice is sightless and eyes are dumb.” All the damsels were delighted at her speech, and perceiving the intense longing in Sita’s bosom, one of them exclaimed,—“My dear, they must be the king’s sons, who, as I hear, arrived yesterday with the saint, who completely fascinated with their beauty and stole away the hearts of all the women in the city. Every one is talking of their loveliness; we really must see them; they are worth seeing.” These words were most grateful to Sita, whose eyes were restless with longing. With her kind friend to lead the way, she followed, nor did any one know that it was an old love.

Dohá 241.

Remembering Nárada’s words, she was filled with holy devotion, and anxiously turned her gaze on every side, like a startled fawn.

Chutupú 231.

When he heard the sound of the golden bangles on her hands and feet, Ráma thought within himself, and then said to Lakshman,—“Imagine Love triumphant over the whole world to be now sounding the kettledrum of victory.” So saying he again looked in that direction, and like the moon on the *chakor* flashed Sita’s face upon his sight. His eyes became as immovably fixed as though Nimi, the winking god, had fled

in confusion from his wonted post. Beholding her beauty he was enraptured; but his admiration was all within, and utterance failed him. As though the great Architect, after creating the world, had put before it in visible form all the skill with which he had fashioned it; or as if the Beautiful had been beautified into a temple of beauty and illuminated by a sudden flash of torchlight; but all the similes of the poets are stale and hackneyed; where can I find any likeness to Jánaki;

Dohá 242.

Dwelling in heart on Síta's beauty and reflecting on his own good fortune, the pure-souled god thus addressed his brother in terms appropriate to the occasion,—

Chaupái 235.

“Brother, this is the very daughter of king Janak for whom the tournament has been ordained. She has come with her attendants to worship Gauri, and a train of light marks her path through the garden. At the sight of her divine beauty, my ordinarily placid bosom is agitated; God alone knows the cause, but of a truth, brother, my lucky side is throbbing as though for coming good fortune. It has always been a mark of the race of Raghu that they never set their heart on evil courses; and thus I am confidently assured that all will be well; for I have never even in a dream looked upon another man's wife to long after her. And rare, indeed, in the world are the men who neither turn their back upon the foe in battle nor covet their neighbour's wife, and from whom no beggar meets a rebuff.”

Dohá 243.

Thus discoursing to his brothers, and with his soul enamoured of Síta's beauty, like a bee sucking honey from a flower, he drank in the loveliness of her face.

Chaupái 236.

Síta kept looking anxiously all round, in doubt as to where the princes had gone. Wherever fell her fawn-like

glance, it seemed a rain of glistening lotus flowers. Then her companions pointed out to her under the shade of the creepers the two lovely youths, the one dark, the other fair of hue. Her eyes, on beholding their beauty, were filled with longing and with the gladness of one who has found a long-lost treasure. Wearied with gazing upon Ráma's charms, her eyelids forgot to wink, and her whole frame was fulfilled with desire, as is the partridge when it sees the autumnal moon. Receiving Ráma into her heart by the pathway of vision, she craftily closed upon him the doors of her eyelids. When her companions saw her thus overcome, they were too much abashed to utter a word.

Dohá 244.

Then emerged the twin brothers from the shade of the harbour, like two spotless moons from a riven cloud.

Chaupái 237.

Two gallant champions, the perfection of beauty, like a white lotus and a dark, with their hair parted like a raven's wing on their comely head, and here and there bedecked with bunches of flower-buds; their forehead bright with the *tilak* and beads of perspiration, and their graceful ears adorned with ornaments; with arched eyebrows and curly locks, and eyes bright as a lotus bud, with lovely chin and nose and cheeks, and a gracious smile enslaving every soul—such beauteous features as I could never describe: they would put to shame a myriad Loves. With a string of jewels on his breast, with exquisitely dimpled neck, and powerful arms, like the trunk of some young elephant in whom Kámadeva had become incarnate; with the flowers and cup of leaves in his left hand, the dark prince, O my friend, is beautiful exceedingly.

Dohá 245.

As her companions gazed upon the two glories of the Solar race, with their lion-like waist and bright yellow attire, very abodes of bliss and amiability, they lost all self-consciousness.

Chaupái 238.

Yet one summoning up courage, grasped Síta by the hand and said,—“You can at any time meditate upon Gauri ; why not now look at the princes?” Then the modest Síta unclosed her eyes and saw before her the two scions of Raghu. As she gazed on Ráma, all beautiful from head to foot, and remembered her father’s vow, she was greatly agitated. When her companions saw her thus overcome they all cried as if in alarm,—“It is getting late ;” and one added with a meaning smile,—“We must come again at this time to-morrow.” On hearing this clever hint Síta was abashed and said, as if in fear of her mother,—“It is late, indeed.” Then summoning up resolution, she fixed the image of Ráma in her heart and turned to go ; but again she thought how entirely it all depended upon her sire,

Dohá 246.

and under pretence of looking at a deer, or bird, or tree, again and again she turned her head, and each time that she beheld the beautiful Raghubír her love was augmented not a little.

Chaupái 239.

The thought of Siva’s unyielding bow made her wild and as she went she kept in her heart the image of the dark-hued swain. When the Lord perceived that she was going, he drew in his heart with the indelible ink of love a charming sketch of her infinite beauty and virtue and blissful devotion. Again she sought Bhaváni’s shrine, and after embracing her feet, thus prayed with clasped hands,—“Glory, glory, glory to thee, O daughter of the mountain-king, as fixed in thy gaze on Siva’s face as is the partridge on the moon ; O mother of Ganes and Kartikeya ; great mother of the world ; whose body is lustrous as the lightning ; of whom there is neither beginning nor middle nor end ; whose infinite majesty is a mystery even to the Veda ; cause of the birth, continuance, and ultimate destruction of all being ; enchantress of the universe ; delighting in thy own supremacy :

Dohá 247.

Among all faithful wives and true women, thy name, O mother, holds the first place ; thy immeasurable grandeur is more than a thousand Sáradáś and Seshnágs could tell.

Chaupái 240.

The four-fold rewards of life are easy of attainment by thy servants, O granter of boons, beloved of Tripurári ; and all, O goddess, who adore thy lotus feet, are made happy, whether they be gods, or men, or saints. Thou knowest well my heart's desire, for in the heart of man thou ever dwellest : there is no need that I declare it aloud to thee." So saying, Síta embraced her feet. Bhaváni was moved by her humility and devotion ; the image smiled and a garland dropt. Reverently Síta clasped to her bosom the divine gift, and Gauri herself with a heart full of joy thus spoke,— "Hearken, Síta ; my blessing is effectual ; your heart's desire shall be accomplished. Nárad's words are ever truth itself ; the bridegroom upon whom your soul is set shall, indeed, be yours.

Chhand 32.

The dark-complexioned youth, upon whose innate beauty your soul is set, shall indeed be yours. The All-merciful in his wisdom knows your loving disposition." On hearing Gauri pronounce this blessing, Síta and her companions were glad of heart, and in their delight (says Tulsi) returned again and again to the temple to adore the goddess.

Sorathá 24.

Finding Gauri so gracious, Síta was more glad of heart than words can tell ; and as an auspicious omen, her left side, the seat of good fortune, began to throb.

Chaupái 241.

The two brothers returned to their guru, inwardly praising Síta's loveliness ; and Ráma related to him all that had taken place, being simplicity itself and utterly devoid of all guile. The saint took the flowers and performed his devo-

tions, and then imparted his blessing to the two brothers, saying,—“May your desire be accomplished.” Rāma and Lakshman gladdened at the words. Then, after taking food, the saintly sage began the recital of sacred legends. When the day was spent, they first asked his permission and then went out to perform their evening duties. The glorious moon was rising in the eastern sky, and its orb reminded them of Sīta’s lovely face ; but afterwards they thus reasoned within themselves,—“The queen of night is not to be compared with Sīta ;

Dohá 248.

for she was born of the restless Ocean, with poison for a brother, and by day she is dim and obscure, how then can such a poor feeble creature be matched with the lovely Sīta.

Chaupái 242.

She waxes and wanes, is the curse of love-sick maids, and is devoured by Ráhu whenever the appointed time comes round ; she causes anguish to the *chakwa* and withers the lotus ; O moon, thou art full of faults. It is a great sin and highly improper to compare Janak’s daughter to thee.” Thus, finding in the moon a pretext for extolling Sīta’s beauty, they returned to their guru, the night being now far advanced, and after bowing themselves at his feet and obtaining his permission they retired to rest. When the night was over, Raghunāyak arose and, looking towards his brother, thus began to say,—“See, brother, the day has dawned to the delight of the lotus, the *chakwa* and all mankind.” Then said Lakshman in gentle tones and with folded hands, declaring the glory of the Lord,—

Dohá 249.

“At the dawn of day the lily fades and the brightness of the stars is dimmed, so at the news of your coming all the princes waxed faint ;

Chaupái 243.

for bright though they be as the planets, they cannot

master the night-black bow. The lotus, the *chakwa*, the bee, and every bird—all rejoice in night's defeat; and so, O lord, all your votaries will be glad when the bow is broken. Sunrise is an easy triumph over darkness: the constellations retire and light flashes upon the world. O Raghurái, the sun in its rising shows the chiefs in a figure the majesty of their lord, and your mighty arms are as it were the pass in the eastern mountain through which is manifested the spectacle of the broken bow." The Lord smiled to hear his brother's speech. The All-pure then performed the daily rites of purification and bathed and, after observance of the prescribed ceremonies, presented himself before the guru and bowed his comely head at his feet. Then Janak summoned Satánand and sent him in haste to Visvamitra. He came and declared his sovereign's message, and also called for the two brothers.

Dohá 250.

After reverently saluting Satánand, the Lord went and sat down by his guru, who said,—“Come, my son, Janak has sent for you.

Chaupái 244.

You must go and see Síta's nuptials, and who is the happy man whom heaven will honour." Said Lakshman,—“His will be the glory, my lord, upon whom your favour rests." The saints were glad to hear this seemly speech, and all with much effusion gave their blessing. Then the gracious god, attended by all the saintly throng, sallied forth to witness the tournament. No sooner had they reached the arena than the news spread all over the city, and every one put away his work and came thronging in, men and women, young and old, and even children in arms. When Janak saw the enormous crowd he gave orders to his practised servitors,—“Go round at once to all the people and marshal them to their proper seats.”

Dohá 251.

With courteous phrase they respectfully seated them all,

both men and women, according to their respective rank, whether noble, burgher or churl.

Chaupái 245.

Then stept forth the two princes like beauty beautified, graceful and accomplished champions, one dark, the other fair, but both charming : resplendent in the assembly of princes like two full moons in a circle of stars. Every spectator seemed to see in them an embodiment of his own conception : the princes beheld a gallant warrior, as it were the Heroic incarnate : the wicked kings trembled at the sight of the Lord, as a visible presentment of the Terrible ; the demons in their princely disguise thought they saw the image of Death : while the citizens regarded the twin brothers as the g'ory of manhood, a delight to the eyes.

Dohá 252.

The women with joy of heart saw what each loved most, as it were a bright vision of the Erotic in utterly incomparable form.

Chaupái 246.

By sages the Lord was seen in his divine majesty with many faces and hands and feet and eyes and heads. And how did he appear to Janak's family group ? Like a noble kinsman and friend. The queen, no less than the king, regarded him with unspeakable love like a dear child : to mystics he shone forth as eternal Truth, the placid radiance of unruffled Quietism ; while to the pious the two brothers, appeared as their own benignant patron saint. But as for Síta, when she gazed on Râma, her love and joy were unspeakable ; if she could not utter the emotion of her heart, how can any poet declare it ? Thus according to the ruling passion of each individual spectator, were the Kosala princes seen by each—

Dohá 253.

Resplendent in the midst of the royal circle in their contrasted beauty, stealing the eyes of the whole universe.

Chāupāī 247.

Both with such facile grace of form that a myriad Loves were all too mean a comparison : with beaming face, that would put to shame the autumnal moon, and irresistibly charming lotus eyes ; with a glance so unspeakably winning that it would rob Love of all his pride ; with rounded cheeks and ears adorned with pendulous gems ; with beautiful chin and lips and sweet voice ; with a smile more radiant than the light of the moon, and arched eyebrows and delicate nose ; a broad forehead with glittering *tilak*, and clustering locks with which no swarm of bees could vie ; with yellow turban on their shapely head, dotted here and there with flower-buds ; with exquisite neck, marked with a triple line, enclosing as it were the bliss of the three spheres of creation.

Dohā 254.

Adorned with a necklace of elephant pearls¹ and a *tulsi* garland on their breast ; with the shoulders of a bull and the gait of a lion, and long arms very models of strength.

Chāupāī 248.

By their side a quiver slung from a yellow brace ; with arrows in hand and bow on their left shoulder ; with a charming Brāhmanical cord, also of yellow tint, and, in short, beautiful from head to foot, beauty all over. Every one who saw them was made happy, nor could for a minute take his eyes off them. Janak, too, rejoiced to behold the two brothers. Then went he to the saint and embraced his feet, and deferentially related to him all his past history, and showed the hermits the place marked out for the games. Whenever the two gallant princes turned, all men's eyes were dazzled ; each saw in Rāma what he himself most admired, without understanding that it was a special miracle. The saint told the king the arrangements were perfect, and the king was thereby highly gratified.

1 The *kunjara-maṇi*, as it is here named, or more commonly *gajamaṇi*, is a pearl supposed to be found in the projections on the forehead of an elephant.

Dohá 255.

There was one tier of seats bright, spacious and beautiful above all the rest, and here the Rája seated the saint and the two brothers.

Chaupái 249.

At the sight of the Lord all the chiefs grew sick at heart, like the stars at the rising of the full moon: for they felt inwardly assured that beyond all doubt Ráma would succeed in bending the bow; or even if he did not break the massy beam, that Síta would still bestow upon him the garland of victory. And so thinking, sir, they turned homewards, abandoning all glory of victory and pride of strength. There were other kings, blind and insolent fools, who mocked at such words and cried,—“To break the bow and win the bride is a difficulty,¹ but unless it be broken how can the bride be won? Should Death himself for once come forth against us, him too would we conquer in battle for Síta’s sake.” Hearing this there were other kings who smiled, good, pious and sensible men, and said,—

Sorathá 25.

“Ráma will certainly marry Síta, to the discomfiture of those proud-princes; for who can conquer in battle Dasarath’s gallant sons?”

Chaupái 250.

Why thus scoff and throw away your lives to no purpose; imagined sweets stop no man’s hunger. Listen to this my solemn warning: be inwardly assured that Síta is the mother, and Ráma the father of the universe, and feast your eyes to the full on their beauty. These two brothers, so lovely, so gracious, so full of every excellence, have their home in Sambhu’s heart. Why, when you have a sea of ambrosia at hand, should you leave it to run upon your death in pursuit of a mirage? But do ye what seemeth you good: we have to-day reaped our life’s reward.” So saying the good kings

¹ The word *avagáha* in this line is explained in glossaries by *atháh* ‘unfathomable,’ as if from the root *gáh*, to dive into. Rather, however, it seems to be for *avagráha* (as *kahi* for *krodhi*), meaning an impediment or difficulty.

turned to gaze with affection on the picture of incomparable beauty ; while in heaven the gods mounted their chariots to behold the spectacle, and showered down flowers and uttered songs of joy.

Dohā 256.

Then seeing the fitness of the time, Janak sent and summoned Sīta ; and obediently she came, with all her lovely and accomplished attendants.

Chaupāī 251.

Her beauty is not to be told : seeing that she is the mother of the world, the perfection of all grace and goodness, every comparison seems to me unworthy of her and appropriate only to mortal woman. In describing Sīta, to what can she be likened, or what can the poet name that will not rather do her dishonour ? If I should liken her to other women, where is there on earth any nymph so lovable ; or, if I look to the denizens of heaven, Sarasvatī is a chatterer ; Bhavānī has only half a body ; Rati is in sore distress on account of her disfigured lord ; and as for Lakshmi, the twin-birth of poison and strong drink, how can Sīta be compared to her ? Even though the ocean of ambrosia were the Beautiful, and the tortoise Grace, the rope being Fascination, and Mount Meru the amorous sentiment, while Love with his own lotus hand played the part of charmer ;

Dohā 257.

Even then, though Lakshmi the source of all beauty and bliss, had thus been born, still the poet would shrink from saying that she could be compared to Sīta.

Chaupāī 252.

She came, and with her attendant maids, singing sweet-voiced songs : the mother of creation, of incomparable beauty ; her delicate frame veiled in a fair white robe, and with a profusion of brilliant and tasteful ornaments, with which her maidens had bedecked her every limb. When she set her foot within the lists, all beholders, men and women

alike, were fascinated by her charms; the gods in their delight sounded their kettledrums and rained down flowers midst the singing of the *apsrarasas*. The wreath of victory sparkled in her hands as she cast a hurried glance on the assembled kings, with anxious heart looking for Ráma. Not a king but was love-smitten. But by the saint sat the two brothers and on them she fell with her greedy eyes as upon a rich treasure.

Dohá 258.

Shrinking into herself from awe of the reverend fathers and at the sight vast assemblage, she turned her eyes upon her attendants, though at the same time she drew all Ráma into her soul.

Chaupái 253.

Not a man or woman, who beheld the beauty of Ráma and the loveliness of Síta, could close his eyes for a second: but all thought with dismay of the king's vow and in their heart made supplication to Bráhma,—“O God, quickly remove Janak's obstinacy and make him right-minded as myself. Let the king have no hesitation about breaking his vow and giving Síta in marriage to Ráma: the world will approve, and we all shall be pleased; but obstinacy, if persisted in, will at the last be as a consuming fire in his bosom.” All were absorbed in the same ardent desire, saying,—“The dark youth is the match for Síta.” Then Janak summoned the heralds, who as they came proclaimed his state and dignity, and bade them go and declare his vow. They went, but in their heart was little joy.

Dohá 259.

The heralds cried aloud,—“Hearken, all ye princes: we announce to you our sovereign's vow, and with upraised hands call heaven to witness it.

Chaupái 254.

Though your mighty arms be as the moon, yet Siva's famous bow is as terrible and unyielding as Ráhu. When Rávan and Bánásur saw it—albeit sturdy champions—they

left it and went their way. Here is now the great god's massy beam, and whoever in this royal assembly shall to-day bend it shall be renowned in heaven and earth and hell, and at once without hesitation shall receive in marriage the hand of the king's daughter." When they heard the vow, all the kings were full of eagerness—insolent warriors, savage of soul—and girding up their loins they rose in haste, bowing their heads, ere they commenced, before their patron god. With flushed face and many a close look, they essay the divine bow: but though they put forth all their strength in a thousand different ways they cannot move it. Those, indeed, who had any sense at all did not go near it.

Dohá 260.

After straining at the bow—those foolish kings—without being able to stir it, they retire in confusion, as though it had gathered strength by in turn absorbing the force of each successive warrior.

Chaupái 255.

Next ten thousand kings all at once attempted to raise it, but it was not to be moved and yielding as little as a virtuous wife at the words of a gallant. All the princes appeared as ridiculous as a hermit who has no religion. Their mighty glory and renown and heroism were utterly worsted by the bow, and with much confusion of face and sadness of heart they went and took again each his own place in the assembly. When Janak saw the kings thus dismayed, he cried aloud as it were in anger,—“Hearing the vow that I had made, many kings have come from diverse realms, with gods and demons in human form, stalwart heroes, staunch in fight.

Dohá 261.

A lovely bride, a grand triumph and splendid renown are the prize, but God, it seems, has not created the man who can break the bow and win it.

Chaupái 256.

Tell me now who was dissatisfied with the guerdon or,

refused to try his strength on Siva's bow ; but let alone lifting and breaking, sirs, there was not one of you who could stir it even a grain's breadth from the ground. Now let no proud warrior wax wroth if I assert there is not a man left on earth. Give up all hope and turn your faces homewards : it is God's will that Sita is not to be married. If I break my vow, all my religious merit is gone ; the girl must remain a maid ; what can I do ? Had I known, sirs, that there were no men in the world, I would not have made myself a laughing-stock by recording such a vow." Every man and woman who heard Janak's words and looked at Jánaki were sad ; but Lakshman was furious : his eyes flashed, his lips quivered and his brows were knit.

Dohá 262.

But for fear of his brother he could not speak, though the taunt pierced his heart like an arrow. Yet at last, bowing his head at Rána's lotus feet, he thus spoke in dignified tones :—

Chaupái 257.

"May there never be repeated in any assembly, where even the lowest of the family of Raghu is present, such a scandalous speech as that now uttered by Janak in the presence of the greatest of the clan. Hearken, thou sun of the lotus-like solar race ; I state the simple truth, without any vain boasting ; if only I have thy permission, I will lift the round world with as much ease as a marble, and will break it in pieces like an ill-baked potter's vessel, and tear up Mount Meru like a potherb. Before thy infinite majesty, O my lord god, what is this wretched old bow ? Only give me an order and see what an exhibition I will make. I will take up the bow as though it were a lotus stalk, and will run a hundred leagues with it to convince you.

Dohá 263.

Inspired by thy presence, my lord, I will snap it like the stick of an umbrella ; or if I fail I swear by thy holy feet never to take bow in hand again."

Chaupái 258.

As Lakshman thus spoke in his wrath, earth shook and its elephant supporters tottered; the whole assembly and all the kings were struck with terror; Sita was glad of heart and Janak was ashamed; while the saint and Ráma and all the hermits were enraptured and quivered all over with excitement. Then Ráma with a sign checked Lakshman, and lovingly made him sit beside him, while Visvamitra, perceiving the fitness of the time, spoke in gentle and affectionate tones,—“Up, Ráma, break this bow of Siva’s and relieve Janak, my son, of his affliction.” On hearing the guru’s words he bowed his head at his feet, and without joy or sorrow in his soul rose and stood upright in all his native grace, lordly in gait as a young lion.

Dohá 264.

As Raghubar ascended the stage, like the sun climbing the mountains of the east, the hearts of the saints expanded like the lotus, and their eyes were glad as bees at the return of day.

Chaupái 259.

The dark hopes of the kings vanished like the night, and like the serried stars their vaunts waxed feeble: the arrogant shrivelled up like the lilies, and the false slunk away like the owls; saints and gods, like the *chakra*, were relieved of their distress and rained down flowers in token of homage. After affectionately reverencing the guru’s feet and asking permission of the holy fathers, the lord of all creation quickly stepped forth, with the tread of a majestic elephant when inflamed with love. As he moved, every man and woman in the city quivered all over their body with delight, worshipping the spirits of their ancestors and the gods, and recalling their own past good deeds, saying,—“If my virtuous acts be of any avail, O father Ganes, may Ráma snap the bow as it were a lotus-stalk.”

Dohá 265.

After lovingly gazing upon Ráma, Síta's mother bade her attendants draw near, and thus spoke with affectionate anxiety,—

Chaupái 260.

“Girls, every one is bent on seeing the show, and as for saying what would be for my good, there is no one who will tell the king plainly :—These are two mere boys ; this excessive obstinacy of yours is wrong ; Rávan and Bánásur could not touch the bow, and the kings with all their pride were conquered by it ; how then give it into the hands of these boy-princes ? As well might a cygnet carry off Mount Meru. All the king's good sense is clean gone : Ah, girls, god's ways are inscrutable.” A sharp-witted maiden gently answered,—“O queen, the glorious are never to be lightly regarded. Consider the weakness of Agastya and the boundlessness of ocean ; yet he drained it dry, and his fame has spread through the world. Again, the orb of the sun is small to look at, but—at its rising—darkness is expelled from heaven and earth and hell.

Dohá 266.

A charm is a very little thing, yet it overpowers Bráhma and Vishnu and Mahádeva and all the gods ; and a mere goad governs the mightiest and most furious elephant.

Chaupái 261.

Love, too, though his bow and arrows are but of flowers, has brought the whole world under subjection. Fear not then lady, but hearken to me—Ráma will assuredly break the bow.” She took heart at these words of her attendant, her despondency ceased and her desire was enlarged. Then Síta, with her eyes fixed on Ráma, implored with anxious heart each god in turn, praying to them in her inward soul,—“Be gracious to me, O Mahádeva and Bhaváni, and reward my service by kindly lightening the weight of the bow O divine Ganes, granter of boons, it is with a view to to-day that I

have done you service. Harken to my oft-repeated supplication, and reduce the weight of the bow to a mere trifle."

Dohí 267.

Oft glancing at Raghulír's form, and taking courage from her heaven-ward prayers, her eyes were filled with tears of love, and her whole body was in a tremor.

Chaupí 262.

With fixed gaze she devoured his beauty, and then, as she remembered her father's vow, her soul was troubled,—“Alas, my father, for your cruel resolve, made without any regard to good or evil consequences; not a minister but was afraid to give advice—the more the pity—in the great conclave of counsellors. Here is a bow as firm as adamant, and here a little dark-hued prince of tender frame. O god, how can I maintain my faith?—Is it possible for a delicate *siris* flower to transpierce a diamond? The judgment of the whole assembly has gone astray; now, O bow of Sambhu, thou art the only hope left me; impart thy own heaviness to the crowd, and grow light thyself at once at the sight of Ráma.” So great was the agitation of Síta's soul that an instant of time passed as slowly as an age.

Dohí 268.

As she looks, now at the Lord, and now at the ground, her tremulous eyes so glisten, as it were love's two fish disporting themselves in the orb of the moon.

Chaupí 263.

In her lotus mouth her bee-like voice lies bound; for modesty, like night, allows it not. In the corner of her eye stood a tear-drop, like a miser's buried hoard. Abashed by the consciousness of extreme excitement, she yet summoned up courage and confidence,—“If there is any truth in me at all and I am really enamoured of Raghupati's lotus feet, then the Lord God, who knoweth all men's hearts, will make me Ráma's handmaid; for wherever there is true affection of soul to soul, union will follow beyond a doubt.”

With her eyes fixed upon the lord she recorded this loving vow ; and he, the most merciful, comprehended it all. After looking at Síta he cast a glance at the bow, as Garur might glance at a poor little snake.

Dohá 269.

When Lakshman perceived that the glory of his race had his eye fixed upon the bow, he thrilled with emotion, and striking the earth with his foot, cried thus aloud,—

Cháupái 264.

“Ye elephant warders, ye tortoise, serpent and boar, hold fast the earth with a will that it shake not, for Ráma is about to break the great bow ; hearken to my order and be ready.” When Ráma drew near to the bow, the people all supplicated the gods by their past good deeds. The doubts and errors of the crowd, the arrogance of the foolish kings the proud pretensions of Parasurám, the terror of all the gods and saints, the distress of Síta, the regrets of Janak, the burning anguish of the queens, were all heaped together on the bow as on a raft, while Ráma’s strength of arm was the boundless ocean that had to be crossed, and with no helmsman to essay it.

Dohá 270.

Ráma first looked at the crowd, who all stood dumb and still as statues ; then the gracious Lord turned from them to Síta, and perceived her yet deeper concern ;

Cháupái 265

Perceived her to be so terribly agitated that a moment of time seemed an age in passing. If a man die of thirst for want of water, when he is once dead, of what use to him is a lake of nectar ? What good is the rain when the crop is dead ? or what avails regret when a chance has once been lost ? Thinking thus to himself as he gazed at Jánaki, the Lord was enraptured at the sight of her singular devotion, and after making a reverential obeisance to his *guru*, he took up the bow with most superlative ease ; as he grasped it in

his hand, it gleamed like a flash of lightning; and again as he bent it, it seemed like the vault of heaven. Though all stood looking on, before any one could see, he had lifted it from the ground and raised it aloft and drawn it tight, and in a moment broken it in halves; the awful crash re-echoed through the world.

Chhand 33.

So awful a crash re-echoed through the world that the horses of the Sun started from their course, the elephants of the four quarters groined, earth shook, the great serpent, the boar and the tortoise tottered. Gods, demons and saints put their hands to their ears, and all began anxiously to consider the cause; but when they learnt that Ráma had broken the bow, they uttered shouts of Victory.

Sorathi 26.

All the deluded crowd who had gone on board 'the Siva's bow' were drowned in the waves of Ráma's might.

Chaupai 266.

The Lord tossed upon the ground the two broken pieces of the bow, and at the sight the multitude rejoiced. Visvamitra's love, like the clear unfathomed depth of ocean, swelled to the highest tide of ecstasy under the full moon influence of Ráma's presence. There was a jubilant noise of music in the sky; the heavenly nymphs danced and sang; Bráhma and all the gods and deified saints and sages praised and blessed the hero, and rained down wreaths of many-coloured flowers; the *kinnars* sung melodious strains; and the shout of 'Victory, Victory,' re-echoed throughout the world. The noise that followed the breaking of the bow defies description. Everywhere the people in their joy kept saying,—'Ráma has broken the great bow.'

Dohá 271.

Bards, minstrels and rhapsodists raise their loud-voiced peans, and all the people lavish offerings of horses, elephants, money, jewels and raiment.

Chaupai 267.

There was a clash of cymbals, tabors, conches, clarions, sackbuts, drums, kettledrums and all kinds of music; and in every place were choirs of women singing auspicious strains. The queen with her attendants was as glad as a parched rice-field at a fall of rain; Janak was as pleased and free of care as a tired swimmer on reaching a shallow; the kings were as confounded at the breaking of the bow as a lamp is dimmed at dawn of day; but Síta's gladness can only be compared to that of the *chúta-ki*¹ on finding a rain-drop in October; while Lakṣman fixed his eyes on Rāma as the *chakor* on the moon. Then Satánand gave the word and Síta advanced to Rama.

Dohá 272.

Graceful in motion as a swan, and of infinite beauty in every limb; and with her came her fair and sprightly companions, who raise the glad marriage song.

Chaupái 268.

Resplendent in their midst as the Queen of Love among the loves, she held in her lotus hand the fair wreath of victory, enriched as it were with the spoils of a world-wide triumph. With modest air, but rapture in her soul, her interior devotion was withdrawn from sight. As she drew near and beheld Rāma's beauty, she stood motionless like a figure on the wall, till a watchful attendant roused her, saying,—'Invest him with the ennobling wreath.' At the word she raised the wreath with both her hands, but was too much overcome by emotion to drop it; till as the lotus, flower and stalk, shrinks at the moonlight, so her hand and arm drooped in the glory of his moon-like face. At the sight of his beauty her handmaids break into song, while Síta let fall the wreath upon his breast.

¹ The *chúta-ki* (*Chutabulandara*) is fabled never to drink, except it be such drops of rain as fall in the month of October, when the sun is in the same longitude as Arcturus. (*Siddh.*) a time of the year when a shower is a very rare occurrence. The same precious drops if they fall into the sea, are transmuted into pearls, a belief to which allusion is made in page 9.

Sorathi 27.

When the gods saw the wreath resting on his breast they showered down flowers ; and the kings all shrunk into nothing, like lilies at the rising of the sun.

Chaupai 269.

Both in the city and in heaven there were sounds of music ; the bad were saddened, and the good were glad. Gods, kinnars, men, serpents and saints uttered blessings and shouts of victory. The heavenly nymphs danced and sung, and flowers fell in constant showers. In every place were Bráhmans muttering Vedic texts, and rhapsodists reciting lays of praise. Earth, hell and heaven were pervaded with the glad news,—"Ráma has broken the bow and will wed Síta." The men and women of the city light votive torches and, regardless of their substance, scatter gifts in profusion. Síta by Ráma's side was as resplendent as if Beauty and Love had met together. Her companions whisper,—"Embrace your lord's feet ;" but in excess of fear she dares not touch them.

Dohi 273.

She touches them not with her hands, remembering the fate of Gautama's wife ; and Ráma smiled inwardly at this proof of her supernatural devotion.

Chaupai 270.

Then, as they looked on Síta, the kings were inflamed with desire, and waxed wroth of soul—frantic, degenerate fools—and sprung up—the wretches—and donned their armour and began a general chorus of abuse,—"Come now, let us carry off Síta and overthrow and bind fast these two princes ; though he has broken the bow, he has not yet gained his end ; for who shall marry Síta while we still live ? If the king give them any assistance, we will rout him in battle as well as the two brothers." When the good kings heard these words they answered and put the whole assembly to shame,—"The glory of your might and greatness of your strength

were disgraced for ever at the breaking of the bow. Is that the might of which ye now boast, or have ye since acquired something new? Was it not thus that ye reckoned afore, when God so blackened your faces?

Dohí 274.

Cease from envy and arrogance and folly; feast your eyes upon Rāma; and be not like a moth in the fierce flame of Lakshman's wrath.

Chaupái 271.

Like a crow who would rob the king of the birds¹ of an offering; or a rat who would spoil a lion; as a man who is passionate without cause and yet wishes for peace of mind; as a reviler of Siva who wishes for happiness and prosperity; as a greedy and covetous man who wishes for fair fame, and as a gallant who would have no scandal; as an enemy of God who wishes to be saved; such is your desire, O ye kings." When Sita heard the tumult, she was afraid, and with her companions went away to the queen, while Rāma composedly joined the *guru*, talking to himself of Sita's affection. Sita and the queen were much distress, saying,—“What is it God would have now?” And at the sound of the voices of the kings they looked helplessly up and down. For fear of Rāma Lakshman could not speak.

Dohí 275.

With fiery eyes and knitted brows he cast a furious look at the kings, like a lion's whelp watching to spring on a herd of wild elephants.

Chaupái 272.

Seeing the tumult, the people were all distress and joined in reproaching the kings. Then it was that the sun of the lotus race of Bhrigu (Parasurám) arrived, for he had heard of the breaking of the bow. At the sight of him the kings all cowered down, as a partridge shrinking beneath the

¹ The king of the birds—Garur—is here called *Vainateya*, that is to say, the son of Vinatí.

swoop of a hawk. Of pallid hue and well bestreaked with ashes; with the three horizontal lines sacred to Siva conspicuous on his broad forehead; with the hair on his head bound in a knot; and his moon-like face flushed with the furnace fire of smouldering wrath; with frowning brows and eyes inflamed with passion; he casts a quick and furious glance around. With bull-like shoulders and mighty chest and arms; with fair sacrificial cord and string of beads and deer-skin with an anchorite's dress about his loins and two quivers slung by his side; with bow and arrows in hand, and his sharp axe upon his shoulder,

Dohá 276.

In his saintly attire and savage mien a figure beyond description, as though the Heroic had taken the form of a hermit; so he drew near to the kings.

Chaupái 273.

When they beheld his ghastly attire, they all rose in consternation, each mentioning his own and his father's name, and fell prostrate on the ground before him; and even those on whom he cast a kindly glance thought their life had come to an end. Then came Janak and bowed his head and called for Síta also to pay him homage. He bestowed upon her his blessing, and her glad companions escorted her back to her own apartments. Next came Visvamitra to salute him, and placed the two boys at his feet, saying,—“These are Ráma and Lakshman, Dasarath's sons.” He admired the well-matched pair and blessed them, with his eyes long fixed upon Ráma's incomparable beauty, which would humble the pride even of Love himself.

Dohá 277.

Then he turned and said to Videha,—“Why all this crowd?” Asking as though he did not know, while his whole body was bursting with passion.

Chaupái 274.

Janak told him the whole history and the reason why the

kings assembled. After hearing his reply he again looked away and spied the fragments of the bow lying on the ground. In a mighty passion he cried in furious tones,—“Tell me now, Janak, you fool who has broken the bow? Show him to me at once, or this very day I will overthrow the whole of your dominion.” In his excess of fear the king could give no answer: the wicked suitors were glad of heart; gods, saints, serpents and all the people of the city were full of anxiety and profound alarm; Sita’s mother was lamenting,—“God has now undone all that had just been done so well;” and Sita when she heard of Bhṛīgupati’s character felt half a minute pass like an age.

Dohā 278.

Seeing the people’s consternation and Jānaki’s anxiety, the imperturbable Raghubir thus spoke and said,—

Chaupāī 275.

“My Lord, the bow has probably got broken by some one of your servants. What are your orders? Why not tell me?” At this the furious saint was yet more incensed and cried,—“A servant is one who does service, but he who does the deeds of an enemy must be fought. Hearken, Rāma, whoever it was who broke Siva’s bow is as much my enemy as was Sahasrabāhu. Separate him from among the assembly, or else every one of these kings shall be killed.” When Lakshman heard the saint’s words, he smiled and said to him in a tone of contempt,—“O sir, I have broken many a bow as a child, and you were never before thus angry: why were you so fond of this bow in particular?” Parasurām replied in a fury,—

Dohā 279.

“Ah! death-doomed prince, is there no stopping your tongue? Would you compare to a common bow the great bow of Siva, that is famous throughout the world?”

Chaupāī 276.

Said Lakshman with a smile,—“I thought, holy sir, that all bows were alike. What gain or what loss can there be

in the breaking of a worn-out bow? Ráma by mistake took it for a new one, and directly he touched it, it snapped in two: but it was no fault of his; why then, reverend sir, be so angry for no cause?" He answered, with a glance at his axe,—“Fool, have you never heard of my temper? I do not slay you because, as I say, you are but a child. You in your folly take me for a mere recluse: and from my childhood an ascetic I am, but a fiery one and the terror of the whole Kshatriya race, as is known throughout the world. By the might of my arm I have made earth kingless, and time after time have bestowed her upon the Bráhmans. See here, you king's son, the axe with which I lopped of Salasra-báhu's thousand arms.

Dohá 280.

Do not bring distress upon your father and mother: my cruel axe has ripped up even unborn infants in the womb.”

Champú 277.

Lakshman replied with a quiet smile,—“Ah! holy sir, you think yourself a great warrior indeed, and keep brandishing your axe before me, as if with a mere puff of breath you could blow away a mountain. But I am not a *kumhar* blossom that droops as soon as it sees a finger raised against it. When I perceived your axe and quiver and arrows, I spoke a little haughtily; but now that I see by your Bráhmanical thread that you are of Bhrigu's line, say what you like and I will bear it patiently. In my family there is no waging battle against gods or Bráhmans, or devotees, or cows; for to kill them is a crime, and to be overcome by them a disgrace; and therefore I must throw myself at your feet, even though you strike me. Your curse is as awful as a million thunderbolts, and your axe and bow and arrows are unnecessary.

Doh 281.

Pardon me, great and reverend sage, for anything improper that I said when I first saw you.” The glory of Bhrigu's race cried furiously in his deep toned voice,—

Chaupái 278.

"Hearken, son of Kusika;¹ this child is demented; a perverse and death doomed destroyer of his own house; a dark spot on the moon-like brightness of the Solar race; utterly ungovernable, senseless and reckless. Another moment and he shall be a mouthful in the jaws of death, and I loudly protest it is no fault of mine. Take him away, if you would save him, and teach him my glory and might and the fierceness of my temper." Said Lakshman,—“So long as you live, father, who else can tell your fame so well? With your own mouth you have many times and in many ways declared your own doings. If you are not yet satisfied, tell them over again, and do not distress yourself beyond endurance by putting any restraint upon your passion. But if you are really a resolute and dauntless warrior, there is no honour to be got by abuse.

Dohá 282.

Heroes perform valiant deeds in fight, but do not themselves publish them: cowards finding a foe before them in the battle talk very large, as you

Chaupái 279.

now would terrify me with your repeated cries of Death." On hearing Lakshman's rude speech he closed his hand upon his terrible axe,—“After this let no man blame me; this sharp-tongued boy deserves his death. I have spared him long on account of his being a child, but now of a truth he is as good as dead.” Said Visvamitra,—“Pardon his offence; the wise regard not the faults or merits of children.” “I have axe in hand and am pitiless in my wrath; he is moreover guilty: and has injured my *guru*. Yet though this be my answer, I will still spare his life, though solely out of regard for you, Visvamitra. But for you I had cut him in pieces with my terrible axe, and thus easily have paid my *guru* his due.”

Dohá 283.

Said the son of Gádhi, smiling to himself,—“Everything

1 The son, or rather grandson, of Kusika is Visvamitra.

looks green to the saint's eyes; ¹ though Rāma has to-day broken the bow as though it were a stick of sugarcane, still he has not the sense to understand."

Chaupái 280.

Said Lakshman,—"Is there any one, Father, ignorant of your honour? it is notorious throughout the world. You have well paid the debt you owed to your father and mother; ² but it was a great distress to you to be still in debt to your *guru*. You have now transferred the account to me, but the interest by lapse of time has become very heavy. So you must bring forward the original creditor, and then, sir, I will at once open my purse." When he heard these bitter words he grasped his axe, and all the people cried—Alack, alack! "O Bhṛigu-bar, you still keep showing me your axe, but, regicide as you are, I only spare you on account of your being a Bráhmaṇ. You have never yet met a real staunch fighting man, and, most reverend sir, you are a great man only in your own house." They all cried out,—'How very wrong;' and Rāma gave Lakshman a sign to be quiet.

Dohá 284.

Lakshman's words were like oil on the fire of Bhṛigupati's wrath; till, seeing the flame increase, Rāma quenched it with the flood of admonition,—

Chaupái 281.

"My lord, have compassion on a child, and wreak not your wrath on such an unweaned infant: if he had any idea of your glorious power, how could he be so foolish as to put

¹ The allusion is to a popular saying,—'A man who loses his eyesight in the month of Śíwan thinks everything is always green.' *Hariari*, 'green, may also be taken as two words *Hari* and *ari*, 'an enemy to Vishnu,' a light in which it would be the height of folly for Parasurám to regard Rāma, since Rāma was himself an incarnation of Vishnu, as also was Parasurám. The double interpretation was probably intended by the poet.

² Every Hindu is said to be in debt by nature to three persons, *viz.*, his father, his mother and his *guru*. The two first debts had been paid by Parasurám in a notable fashion; for he had restored his mother Renuká to life again after he had first cut off her head in obedience to his father Jama-tagni's order; and again when his father had been slain by Sahasrabáhu, he avenged him by the slaughter of the whole Kshatriya race. It now remained for him to satisfy his *guru*, Mahádeva, for the outrage Rāma had done him in breaking his bow.

himself on an equality with you? When a child commits any naughtiness, its *guru* and father and mother are in raptures at it. Have pity then on the boy, who is really one of your clients; for thus it becometh a saint, so patient and wise as you are." On hearing Ráma's words he cooled down a little but again Lakshman said something with a smile, and seeing him smile he flushed all over with rage,—“Ráma, your brother is too wicked; though fair in outward hue, he is black at heart, and it is not mother's milk but poison that his lips have sucked. Perverse by nature, he neither takes after you nor regards me.”

Dohá 285.

Said Lakshman with a smile,—“Hearken, O saint, passion is the root of sin; those who are under its influence do unseemly things and set themselves against every one.

Chaupái 282.

I am one of your followers, reverend sir; put away your wrath and show mercy upon me. Anger will not mend the broken bow; pray sit down, you must be tired of standing. If you were so very fond of it, devise a plan for getting it mended and call in some skilful workman.” Janak was frightened at Lakshman's words,—“Be quiet; such frowardness is not right.” The citizens all shook and trembled: to think so small a boy could be so naughty. As Bhṛigupati heard his fearless words his whole body was on fire with rage, and he became quite helpless, and in a tone of entreaty cried to Ráma,—“See if you can manage this little brother of yours; so fair without and foul within; he resembles a golden jar full of poison.”

Dohá 286.

At this Lakshman smiled, but Ráma gave him a look of reproof and submissively approached the *guru*, putting away all petulance of speech.

Chaupái 283.

Clasping his two hands together and speaking in most

modest, gentle and placid tones, he said,—“Hearken, my lord, you were born a sage; pay no heed then to the words of a child. Boys are like gnats: no wise man will ever trouble himself about them. Nor is it he who has done the mischief; I, my lord, am the offender. Be pleased, your reverence, to visit everything on me, your servant, whether it be favour or anger, or death or bonds. Tell me quickly the means, O king of saints, by which your passion may be assuaged.” Said the saint,—“O Ráma, how can my passion be assuaged? Your brother has to-day set me at nought, and yet I have not struck off his head with my axe: what then have I done in anger?”

Dohá 287,

When they heard of the fierce doings of my axe, [the proudest queens were seized with untimely pains of labour; my axe is still here, and yet I see this princeling, my enemy, alive.

Chaupái 284.

My hand moves not, though passion consumes my breast my regicide axe has become blunted. Fate is against me; my nature is changed: for when was I ever pitiful before? To-day by heaven's will I have suffered intolerable pain.” On hearing this, the son of Sumitrá smiled and bowed his head,—“Even your pity is like a blast of wind and the words you speak would strip a tree of its blossoms. If a saint's body is thus parched even by pity, God help him when he is angry.” “See now, Janak, keep this child away; he is bent in his folly on visting the realms of death. Why do you not at once take him out of my sight, this little prince; so small to look at and yet so wicked?” Lakshman laughed and said to the saint,—“Shut your eyes and you will see nothing.,

Dohá 288.

Then said parasurám in tones of fury to Ráma,—“Wretch, after breaking Siva's bow do you now teach me?

Chaupái 285.

It is at your suggestion your brother utters these sarcasms, and your humility and folded hands are a mockery. Give me my satisfaction in combat, or forswear your name of Ráma. You enemy of Siva, have done with your tricks and meet me in battle, or I will slay both you and your brother too." Flushed with passion he raised his axe on high, but Ráma only smiled and bowed,—“Though the fault is Lakshman's your wrath is against me; it is sometimes a great mistake to be good and upright; for every one is afraid of the crooked, in the same way as Ráhu does not attack the crescent moon. Cease, O great saint, from your wrath.” Said Ráma,—“Your axe is in your hand and my head is in front of you; do anything, sir, that will tend to pacify you, for I am your servant.

Dohá 289.

And how can a servant fight his master? O holy Bráhmaṇ, restrain your wrath; whatever the boy may have said, after looking at your dress, he meant no harm by it.

Chaupái 286.

For seeing you equipt with axe and bow and arrows, the child took you for a knight and challenged you; for though he knew your name, he did not recognize your person, and answered you according to your lineage. If you had come as a Religious, he would have put the dust of your Holiness's feet upon his head. Forgive the mistake of one who did not know you; a Bráhmaṇ's heart should be all mercy. What equality, my lord, can there be between you and me? We are as far apart as head and feet. I am called simply Ráma. You have the long name of 'Ráma of the axe.' I have only one string to my bow, while you have all the holy nine.¹ In every way I am your inferior: as a Bráhmaṇ, pardon my offence."

¹ *Gun*, which is the name for a bowstring, means also virtue; and the cardinal virtues are said to be nine in number, though the list is a variable one.

Dohá 290.

Again and again did Rāma intreat his namesake, addressing him by his titles of 'Saint' and 'Holy Brāhman,' till Bhṛigupati exclaimed in his rage:—"You are as perverse as your brother.

Chaupái 287.

You persist in taking me for a Brāhman ; I will tell you now what kind of a Brāhman I am. My bow is my sacrificial ladle, my arrow the oblation, and my wrath the blazing fire ; armies fully equipt with horses and chariots and elephants and footmen are the fuel, and mighty kings are the victims for oblation whom I have cut in pieces with this axe ; thus have I celebrated countless sacrifices of war all over the world. To you my glory is unknown, and you address me contemptuously, taking me for a mere Brāhman. Now that you have broken the bow, your pride has increased enormously, and you put yourself forward in your arrogance as universal conqueror," Said Rāma :—"O saint, think before you speak ; your anger is excessive ; my fault is a trifling one. The old bow broke at a touch. What reason have I to be proud ?

Dohá 291.

Hear the truth, O Bhṛigunāth ; you say I set you at nought when I treat you with the respect due to a Brāhman ; but is there any warrior to whom I would bow my head in fear ?

Chaupái 288.

Any god, demon, king or warrior, whether my equal in strength or my superior, who will challenge me to combat, him would I gladly meet, or even Death himself. For one who is born of warrior caste and yet shirks the battle is a disgrace to his lineage and a contemptible wretch. I state what is only a characteristic of my race and make no idle boast ; there is not a descendant of Raghu who would fear to meet in battle even Death himself ; but so great is the power of Brāhmanical descent that he fears you, who fears nought else." On hearing this calm and profound speech of Rāma's,

the eyes of the soul of the axe-bearer were opened:—"O Ráma, take and draw this bow of Vishnu's and let my doubts be ended." As he gave it, the bow strung itself of its own accord ; then was Parasurám amazed at heart.

Dohá 292.

He acknowledged the power of Ráma; his whole frame quivered with excitement; and his heart bursting with love, he thus spake with clasped hands:—

Chaupái 289.

"Glory to the Sun of the lotus race of Raghu, to the fire that consumes the serried ranks of the demons ; glory to the friend of gods, Bráhmans and kine ; glory to the dispeller of the delusions induced by pride, ignorance and passion ; glory to him whose piety, amiability, and compassion are fathomless as ocean; glory to him who is unrivalled in the art of speech, the rewarder of service, the all-beautiful of form, more gracious of person than a myriad Loves. How can I with one tongue declare his praise, who is as it were the divine swan in the hyperboreal lake of Mahádeva's soul? In my ignorance I have said much that was unseemly ; but pardon me, ye twin brothers, mercy's shrine." Still repeating as he went :—"Glory, glory, glory, to the mighty Ráma," Bhṛigupati withdrew to the forest to practise penance. The wicked kings were self-dismayed and trembled, and fled—the cowards—in all directions, without a word.

Dohá 293.

The gods sounded their kettledrums and rained down flowers on the Lord ; and all the people of the city rejoiced, now that the thorn of fear and error had been extracted from their heart.

Chaupái 290.

There was a tumultuous clash of instruments of music and a display of all things pleasant and auspicious. Troops of fair faced, bright-eyed maidens joined in song with voices of exquisite melody. Janak's delight was beyond description,

as that of a born beggar who has found a treasure : and Síta relieved of her fears, was as glad as a young partridge at the rising of the moon. The king made obeisance before Visva-mitra, saying :—"It is by my lord's favour that Ráma has broken the bow. These two brothers have gained me my purpose ; tell me now, reverend sir, what it becomes me to do." Said the saint :—"Hearken, wise king ; the marriage was dependent on the bow, and took effect directly the bow broke ; this is well known to every one, whether god, man or Nága.

Dohí 294.

Still, go and perform according to family usage whatever practices are prescribed in the Veda, after consultation with the Bráhmans and elders and your own guru ;

Chaupái 291.

and despatch a herald to Avadh to invite king Dasarath." The princes responded gladly :—"Tis well, gracious sir," and sent a messenger to Avadh that very moment. Then he summoned all the burghers, who came every one of them, and humbly bowing before him received the order :—"Decorate all the markets and streets and temples and shrines in all four quarters of the city." They returned in joy, each to his own house. Then he called up his own servants and instructed them :—"Have all kinds of pavilions made and erected." They obeyed in all gladness and sent word to the different artificers who were skilful in the construction of canopies and triumphal arches ; and they, after invoking Bráhma, set to work and made pillars of gold in the shape of plantain trees,

Dohí 295.

with leaves and fruit of emeralds and ruby flowers ; such a gorgeous show that the Creator was quite disconcerted at the sight.

Chaupái 292.

The rods all encrusted with emeralds, and so like in form

and colour,¹ that no one could tell them from real, with betel leaves fashioned in gold so bright and glistening that no one could look at them. Then they worked up the leaves into wreaths, with strings of beautiful pearls inserted here and there, and after much cutting and graving and in laying made lotuses of mosaic with rubies, emeralds, diamonds, and turquoises. Bees, too, they made and birds of varied plumage, which buzzed and whistled in the rustling breeze; and on the pillars they sculptured figures of the gods all standing erect with things of good omen in their hands. Squares were drawn on the ground and filled in with diverse devices made of elephant pearls,² of exquisite beauty.

Dohá 296.

There were also made most lovely mango-boughs of graven sapphires with blossoms of gold, while clusters of emerald fruit glistened on silken cords.

Chaupái 293.

Next they made charming festoons as it were Love's own nooses and many golden vases with silken flags and banners and waving *chauris* and elegant lamps all studded with gems. It is impossible to describe the various pavilions and in particular the one intended for the royal bride; what poet would have the hardihood to attempt its description? while the canopy for Ráma, the bridegroom, the centre of all beauty and perfection, flashed its radiance through all three worlds. In every house throughout the city there was the same splendour as in Janak's palace; any one who then saw Tirhut thought there was nothing in the fourteen spheres³ to compare with it, and the prosperous appearance of the very

1 Another reading, instead of *sa-ras*, *sabarna*, is *saral sa-parva*, 'straight and knotted.'

2 For *sindhu*, 'an elephant,' another reading is *sindur*, 'vermilion,' but this cannot be correct, since the *chauris* or squares, to which reference is here made, are always marked out with some white material, ordinarily flour, though in a king's palace strings of pearls might be substituted.

3 The fourteen spheres are as follows, *viz.*, first, seven above the earth—Bhur-lok, Bhuvar-lok, Swar-lok, Mahar-lok, Jan-lok, Tap-lok, and Satya-lok; and seven beneath the earth—Atal, Bital, Sital, Rasátal, Mahátal, Talátal, and Pátal.

meanest house was enough to fascinate even the king of heaven.

Dohá 297.

For the magnificence of the city wherein dwelt the goddess Lakshmi, in disguise as a woman, was more than even Sáradá or Seslinág could tell.

Chaupái 294.

When the heralds arrived at Ráma's sacred birthplace, they rejoiced to see the beauty of the city. At the royal gate they sent in word, and King Dasarath at once summoned them to his presence. With a profound salutation they delivered the letter, and the king in his joy rose to receive it. As he read it his eyes filled with tears, his body quivered all over, and his heart seemed bursting. With Ráma and Lakshman in his soul and their dear letter in his hand, he could not utter a word either good or bad. At last, taking courage, he read the letter, and all the court rejoiced to hear the certain news. Now Bharat was playing about, and on hearing the tidings he, nay, the two brothers, came and with the utmost modesty and affection asked :—"Father, where has the letter come from.

Dohá 298.

Is all well with my two dear brothers ? Tell me what country they are in." On hearing these loving words the king again read the letter.

Chaupái 295.

On hearing it the two brothers trembled all over with irrepressible joy, and the whole court was charmed to see Bharat's holy devotion. Then the king seated the messengers close by him and said in sweet and winning tones :—"Tell me, friend, are the two boys well ? Have you really seen them with your own eyes ?" "One is dark, the other fair ; both are equipt with bow and quiver, and are of tender age, and with them is Saint Visvamitra." Said the king again and again in his overpowering love :—You know them, it is

clear ; tell me now of their state ; for from the day that the saint took them away till now I have had no definite news of them. Tell me how Janak knew them." At these fond words the messengers smiled :—

Dohá 299.

"Hearken, O jewel and crown of kings ; there is no man so blest as you, who have for sons Ráma and Lakshman, who are the glory of the whole world :

Chaupái 296.

There is no need to ask your sons who they are ; lion-hearted heroes who irradiate the three spheres. Before their glory and renown the moon is dim and the sun is cold. Why say, my lord, how they were recognized ? Does one take a lamp in his hand in order to see the sun ? The countless kings at Síta's marriage, great warriors as they were, all shrunk away one after the other ; for not one of them could stir Sambhu's bow, but all failed, those mighty princes. The power of the haughtiest champions in the three worlds was crushed by it. Though Bánásur could uproot Mount Meru, even he confessed himself beaten, and retired after pacing around it ; and he who in sport uplifted Kailás (*i. e.*, Rávan) was worsted in this assembly.

Dohá 300.

Then Ráma, the jewel of Raghu's line (hearken, O sovereign lord), snapped the bow with as little effort as an elephant would put forth in breaking the stalk of a lotus.

Chaupái 297.

At these tidings Parasurám came in a fury, and after much brow-beating gave Ráma his own bow to test his strength, then suppliantly withdrew to the woods. Nor is Ráma more conspicuous in his unequalled might than is the all-glorious Lakshman, at sight of whom the kings tremble, as an elephant before a young lion. No one who sees your two sons, sir, can regard anything else on earth." At this eloquent and affectionate speech of the heralds, so loving,

grand and heroic, the king and his court were much moved, and began to offer them lavish gifts ; but they closed their ears, crying,—“ Not so, not so ;” and all were charmed to see their integrity.

Dohi 301.

Then the king rose and went and gave the letter to Vasishtha, and after relating all the circumstances to the *guru* sent courteously for the envoys.

Chaupái 298.

After hearing them the saint was highly pleased and said :—“ To a good man the world is full of happiness. As rivers run into the sea, though it has no greed for them, so joy and prosperity come unasked and of their own accord to a virtuous soul. Strict in the performance of your duties to your *guru* and to Bráhmans and kine and gods, and your queen Kauslayá, no less devout than yourself ; you have no equals for piety in the whole world, either now or in the past, nor hereafter shall have. Who, O king, can be more blest than you, who have a son like Ráma ; nay, four heroic sons, all equally obedient, religious and amiable. Happy, indeed, are you for all time. Prepare the marriage procession to sound of music.

Dohi 302.

Go quickly.” On hearing the saint’s commands the king bowed in assent, and hastened to the palace, after assigning quarters to the heralds.

Chaupái 299.

Then he called all the ladies of the seraglio and read aloud to them Janak’s letter—all rejoiced greatly at the news. He then told them all the verbal message ; and both himself and the queens were as enraptured with delight as a peacock at the sound of approaching rain. The *guru*’s wives in their joy invoked the blessings of heaven, and the queen-mother was completely overwhelmed with ecstasy. They take the dear letter from one another, and press it to their bosom

to cool as it were their burning heart. Again and again ere he turned to the door, the king repeated the glory and the exploits both of Râma and Lakshman, adding,—“It is all by the saint’s good favour.” Then the ladies sent for the Brâhmans and joyfully made them offerings, for which the holy men returned their blessings.

Sorathâ 28.

Next they called together the beggars and lavished every kind of gift upon them :—“ May the four sons of the Emperor Dasarath live for ever :”

Chaupâi 300.

Thus they shouted as they left, attired in raiment of many colours. There was a jubilant clamour of music and in every house, as the news spread among the people, there were joyous congratulations. The fourteen spheres were fulfilled with delight at the marriage of Raghubîr with the daughter of Janak. When they heard the glad tidings, the citizens were enraptured and began decorating the roads and houses and streets ; for although Avadh in itself was a charming place, and clean and pure as being Râma’s home, yet as the natural outcome of its love it garnished and adorned itself still more with festal decorations. Silken flags and banners and graceful *chauris* crested the gay bazâr ; and at every turn were golden jars and festoons of netted pearls and heaps of turmeric, *dûb* grass, curds, rice, and garlands of flowers.

Dohâ 303.

Every one decorated his house ; the streets were duly watered, and every square was filled in with some tasteful design.

Chaupâi 301.

Troops of girls assembled at different places, who had practised all the sixteen kinds of female adornment,¹ brilliant

¹ The sixteen *śringār*, or modes of female adornment, are specified in the following rhymes :

Pañcham ang-sanchit ek bhâra. Mathurâ-janya bakhâni,
Ara. basan pahîra teliya—Yâsk chîrî sujâni.
Pañchama kosa-samvâriya. Shashimalâ mârîg-sindûr.

as the lightning, with moon-like face and fawn-like eyes, and beauty enough to rob even Love of his pride ; singing auspicious strains with voice so melodious that the cuckoo was put to shame on hearing the sweet sound. How is the king's palace to be described ? The pavilion they set up would dazzle the world. Everything beautiful and of fair omen was displayed, and every kind of music was heard. Here were rhapsodists chanting songs of praise ; here were Bráhmaus muttering Vedic spells ; while lovely women carolled joyous songs, ever dwelling on the names of Ráma and Síta. The joy was so great that the palace was too small for it, and it overflowed on all four sides.

Dohá 304.

What poet can describe in full the magnificence of the palace of Dasarath, in which Ráma, the glory of highest heaven, had taken birth ?

Chaupáí 302.

The king next called Bharat :—" Go and prepare horses and elephants and chariots and start at once for Raghubír's marriage procession." When they heard this order, both brothers were full of excitement. Bharat sent for all the chief officers and issued his commands, and they rose in joy and haste to perform them. First they made gorgeous trappings for the horses. Of different colours were the gallant steeds, but all well-proportioned and mettlesome, touching the ground with their feet as lightly as though it were red-hot iron. I cannot tell all the various breeds ; they would race the wind and outstrip it. The princes who mounted them were all like Bharat, graceful, beautiful, and gorgeously attired, with bow and arrows in hand and well-filled quiver at their side.

Bhú-khauri saptama kahat—Ashtam chibuk til pur.
 Mehndi kar pad rachan nava—Dasma argaja ang.
 Gyárah bhúkhan nag-jatit—Bérah pushp prasang.
 Bésrág mukh terahi—Chandah rangiyo dánt.
 Adhar-rág gani panchadasa—Kajjal shodas bhánt.

Dohá 305.

Slim, elegant and lithesome youths, but expert warriors all ; and with each knight were two footmen well skilled in sword-play.

Chaupá 303.

Full of high resolve, the warriors staunch in fight sallied forth and halted outside the city, putting their well-trained steeds through all their paces and rejoicing in the clash of tabor and drum. The charioteers had made their cars equally gorgeous with flags and banners and jewelled adornments, with elegant *chauris* and tinkling bells, so as to outdo in splendour the chariot of the Sun. Innumerable were the black-eared horses,¹ which the grooms yoked to these chariots, and all were so beautiful and richly caparisoned that even a saint would be enraptured at the sight ; skimming the surface of the water like dry land, nor sinking even hoof-deep, so marvellous their speed. After completing their equipment of armour and weapons, the charioteers gave word to their masters,

Dohá 306.

who all mounted in turn, and the procession began to form outside the city ; all, whatever the object on which they were bent, were met by auspicious omens.

Chaupá 304.

On the magnificent elephants were splendid canopies, wrought in a manner beyond all description. As the mighty elephants moved, the bells clanged like the thunder from the clouds in the grateful month of Sáwan. And other vehicles were there of many kinds ; elegant *pálkis* and sedans and coaches, wherein were seated companies of noble Bráhmans, incarnations as it were of all the hymns of the Veda. The genealogists and bards and minstrels and rhapsodists were mounted on other cars according to their rank ; while mules and camels and oxen of every breed were laden with all sorts

¹ A horse to be fit for sacrifice must have black ears.

of baggage ; there were also millions of porters with burdens slung across their shoulders ; but who could enumerate such an endless list of things and the crowd of servants, each with his own set of appliances ?

Dohá 307.

All were glad and fearless of heart, and were quivering with excitement in every limb, saying :---“ When shall we feast our eyes with the sight of the two heroes, Ráma and Lakshman ? ”

Chaupái 305.

The elephants' bells clanged with a fearful din : on all sides there was a creaking of wheels and a neighing of horses ; the drums would drown a tempest's roar, and no one could hear himself speak or any one else. At the king's gate was such an enormous crowd that the stone pavement was all trodden into dust. Women mounted on the upper story viewed the sight, with festal torches and salvers in their hands, and carolled melodious songs in an ecstacy of joy beyond description. Then Sumanta made ready two chariots and yoked them with steeds that would outrun the horses of the Sun, and brought them in all their beauty before the king—not Sáradá herself could do them justice—the one was for the royal retinue, but the other was still more splendid.

Dohá 308.

This the king first caused Vasishta to mount, and then himself ascended, with his thoughts fixed upon Hara, his guru, Gauri, and Ganes.

Chaupái 306.

By Vasishta's side the king shone forth as Purandara beside Vrihaspatí. After performing every ceremony prescribed either by family usage or the Veda, and inspecting whatever had been done, he sallied forth to the blast of the conch shell, after obtaining the permission of his guru, and with his thoughts fixed on Ráma. The beneficent gods rejoiced to see the procession and rained down flowers. There

was a confused uproar, horses neighing, elephants trumpeting, and drums beating, both in the sky and on the line of march. Women and goddesses alike broke out in songs of joy, while tuneful clarions played in sweet accord.

There was an indescribable clamour of bells, both great and small. The foot soldiers leaped and danced as if challenging attack; the jesters practised all kinds of buffoonery, provoking laughter with facetious songs.

Dohí 309.

Gallant youths make their steeds curvet to the measured beat of tabors and kettledrums; accomplished dancers note with surprise that they never make a step out of time.

Chaupái 307.

But it is useless attempting to describe the procession. Every omen that occurred was fair and auspicious. On the left side a blue-necked jay was picking up food as if to announce the very highest good fortune; on a fair field on the right were a crow and a *mangús* in the sight of all; a grateful breeze breathed soft and cool and fragrant; a woman was seen with a pitcher and child; a fox showed himself winding about; and in front a cow was suckling its calf; a herd of deer came out on the right, an indication of everything good; a Bráhma-kite promised all success: also a *syáma* bird perched on a tree to the left; a man was met bearing curds and fish; and two learned Bráhmans with books in their hands.

Dohí 310.

Every good and auspicious omen, and every bestower of desired reward, seemed all to have met at once as if to verify themselves.

Chaupái 308.

Every good and auspicious omen was ready at hand for him whose glorious son was the incarnate God, a bridegroom like Ráma, matched with such a bride as Síta, and with the pious Dasarath and Janak for the two parents

When they heard of the marriage, all the good omens began to dance and say:—"Now at last the Creator has really made us to be what our name denotes." In this manner the procession set forth, with noise of horses and elephants and beat of drums. When Janak, the glory of the Solar race, heard of its approach, he had all the rivers bridged, and at different stages had convenient rest-houses erected, which vied in splendour with the city of heaven and were supplied with everything that one could desire--beds, food and linen. Ever discovering some new charm, all the travellers forgot their own home.

Dohi 311.

When it was known that the procession was close at hand, and the beating of the drums was heard, a deputation went out to meet it, with elephants and chariots and foot and horse.

Chaupai 309.

Beautiful golden vases and trays and salvers and costly dishes¹ of every kind, laden with cakes as sweet as nectar and of indescribable variety, with much luscious fruit and, in short, everything of the best, did the king in his gladness send as an offering. Ornaments, wearing apparel, jewels of all kinds, birds, deer, horses, elephants, carriages of every description, well-omened spices, delicious perfumes, these, too, did the king send, and there was a train of porters with their baskets full of curds and parched rice and other light entremets. When the deputation saw the wedding guests, their soul was full of rapture and their body quivered with excitement; while the guests were no less charmed by the preparations made for their reception and beat their drums.

Dohi 312.

For a little they joined their ranks and marched in their joy as one body for the sake of company; like two oceans of bliss that had burst their bounds and come together.

¹ For *bhajan*, 'dishes,' some copies read *bhajan*, 'food,' but incorrectly, as the context shows.

Chaupái 310.

The nymphs of heaven rained down flowers and sang, the glad gods beat their drums. The offerings were all set out before the king, with a humble and affectionate address. The king graciously accepted them and bestowed them in charity on the poor. Then with religious honours and hymns of praise they conducted him to the guest-chambers. The cloths spread as carpets for King Dasarath to tread upon were so gorgeous that the god of wealth on seeing them could boast no longer. The gods rained down flowers and shouted Victory, Victory. The apartments assigned were most beautiful and supplied with every kind of comfort. When Síta knew that the procession had arrived in the city, she manifested her greatness to a slight extent, and with thoughtful heart called up the eight Siddhis, or wonder-working spirits, and sent them to arrange for the king's reception.

Dohá 313.

Obedient to her command, they repaired to the reception-hall, taking with them every kind of luxury and comfort and all the joys and delights of heaven.

Chaupái 311.

Each guest on going to see his apartment found it a veritable paradise; no, one, however, had an inkling of the mysterious power that had been exerted, but took it all as Janak's doing. Ráma alone recognized the influence of Síta and rejoiced at this proof of her love. When the two brothers heard of their father's arrival they could not contain themselves for joy, but were too modest to speak to their *guru*, though they longed greatly to see their sire again. Visvamitra perceived their humility, which filled his soul with contentment, and took the two brothers to his bosom with quivering body and eyes bedewed with tears. They went then to Dasarath's mansion, like thirsting travellers who have spied a pool.

Dohá 314.

When the king saw the saint coming with the two boys, he rose in joy and advanced to meet them, like one who feels his footing in a deep flood of bliss.

Chaupái 312.

He prostrated himself before the saint, again and again sprinkling on his head the dust of his feet. Visvamisra took him to his bosom and blessed him and enquired after his welfare. Then the two brothers prostrated themselves. The king on seeing them could not contain himself for joy, but took his boys to his heart, and forgetting the intolerable pain of the past seemed like a dead man restored to life. Then they bowed their heads at Vasistha's feet, who also embraced them most affectionately ; and in turn they saluted all the Bráhmans and received their welcome blessings. They greeted Bharat too and his younger brother Satrugna, who at once raised up Ráma and embraced him, and no less rejoiced to see Lakshman again. Thus they all met together with a display of the utmost affection.

Dohá 315.

The all-merciful and gracious lord had an appropriate greeting for all, whether citizens, or attendants, or kinsmen, beggars, or ministers, or friends.

Chaupái 313.

At the sight of Ráma the wedding guests were repaid for their toilsome journey, and their demonstrations of love were beyond all telling. Beside their royal father the four boys seemed as incarnations of the four great ends of life. All the people of the city were delighted beyond measure at the sight of Dasarath and his sons ; the gods rained down flowers and beat their drums ; the nymphs of heaven danced and sang. Satánand with the Bráhmans and ministers of state and the rhapsodists and bards and players and minstrels, who had come in deputation, after duly reverencing the king

and the marriage guests, received permission to return. The whole city was exceedingly delighted that the procession had come before the day fixed for the wedding, and were supremely happy, praying God to lengthen the days and nights :—

Dohá 316.

“Rāma and Sīta are the perfection of beauty, and the two kings the perfection of virtue :” thus would say all the people of the city whenever they happened to meet :—

Chaupái 314.

“Sīta is the incarnation of Janak’s merit and Rāma of Dasarath’s : no one has equalled them in devotion to Sīta, nor has any one obtained such a reward as they have. And all we must be everything that is good, seeing that we have been born into the world as Janak’s citizens and have beheld the beauty of Jānaki and Rāma ; who is so superlatively blest as we are ? and we have yet to see Rāma’s wedding, of all sights the best worth seeing.” So, too, sweet-voiced maidens whispered to one another :—“This marriage, my dear, will be a great treat. God has brought about an event of signal felicity in lodging those two brothers in the guest-chambers of our eyes.

Dohá 317.

Many and many a time will Janak lovingly send for Sīta, and the two brothers, beautiful as a myriad Loves, will come to fetch her.

Chaupái 315.

There will be all kinds of hospitable entertainments ; who, dear girl, would not rejoice in such a father-in-law ? Every one in the place will be delighted at the sight of Rāma and Lakshman ; and now two other lads, my friends, have come with the king, who are a match even for them ; one dark, the other fair, but beautiful in every limb, so says every one who has seen them.” Said one in reply : “I saw them to-day, and thought God must have made them with his own hands. Rāma and Bharat are so much alike that neither man

nor woman could without looking close tell one from the other; while again Lakshman and Satrugghna are also one in appearance, perfectly beautiful in every limb from head to foot; the soul would fain express its rapture, but language fails it, for there is nothing comparable to them in all the three spheres of creation."

Chlotud 34,

No poet, however ingenious, says Tulsí Dás, could find aught comparable to them; for so unbounded is their strength, their courtesy, their knowledge, their amiability and their beauty, that they have no peers but themselves. All the women in the city, spreading out their garments, made prayer to Bráhma,—“ May all four brothers be married here, and may we sing their wedding song.”

Sorathí 29.

Said the damsels to one another with streaming eyes and quivering body :—“ Friends, the two kings are of such boundless religious merit that for their sake Mahádeva will bring it all about.”

Chaupái 316.

In like manner they all expressed their desire, while their full heart overflowed with rapture. When the kings, who had come as Síta's suitors, saw the brothers, they all rejoiced and returned to their own homes, extolling Ráma's high and spotless fame. In this fashion several days were spent, to the joy alike of citizens and guests. At length the auspicious day arrived, in the cold season, in the pleasant month of Agahn. The Creator himself had carefully fixed the date, when the sign of the zodiac, the age of the moon, the conjunction of the stars and the day of the week were one and all propitious. Of this he sent word through Nárada, and it was the very same that Janak's wise men had calculated. All the people on hearing this fact declared their astrologers to be very gods.

Dohá 318.

It was towards sunset,¹ the clearest and most delightful hour of the day, that the Bráhmans apprized Videha's king that the auspicious time had arrived.

Chaupái 317.

The monarch cried to the family priest :—"What is now the cause of delay ? At once Satánand summoned the ministers, who all came bearing festal vases : conches, drums, and tabors sounded ; all decked their vases in auspicious wise : graceful damsels sang songs, and holy Bráhmans murmured Vedic texts. In this manner they went with all ceremony to the visitors' camp, and on beholding the king of Kosala's retinue it seemed to them that Indra was of much less glory. "The hour has come, be pleased to start." At this the drums gave a thundering beat. After consulting his *guru* and performing the family rites, the king and the saint sallied forth with all their host.

Dohá 319.

Bráhma and all the other gods, on beholding the pomp and magnificence of Avadh's king, began to extol him with a thousand tongues and declare their own life to have been wasted.

Chaupái 318.

Seeing the auspiciousness of the time, the deities rained down flowers and beat their drums. Siva and Bráhma and all the host of heaven mounted their chariots and came in

1 The word *dhenu-dhūli* stands for the more common *go-dhūli*—for *go* and *dhenu* are identical in meaning—and denotes the unfortunately very brief period of the day during which the Indian climate is thoroughly enjoyable. Professor Monier Williams in his Sanskrit dictionary explains the words as follows : " 'dust of the earth' ; a period of the day in the hot season when the sun is half risen ; in the cold and dewy seasons when the sun is full but mild ; and in the three other seasons, sunset ; originally, a time at which mist seems to rise from the earth." I have always myself considered that the first part of the compound was used in its more ordinary sense of 'a cow,' and that *go-dhūli* would be literally rendered 'dust of cows,' not 'dust of the earth.' The word is still current in village use, and when I have been moving about in the district in the cold weather I have heard it applied by the country-people to the hour of sunset, when the cattle were all coming home from pasture, and raising dense clouds of dust along the narrow lanes ; a fact to which the speaker was evidently referring, and which, I think, is the more correct explanation of the etymology.

crowds to see Ráma's wedding, their heart and every limb throbbing and quivering with excess of love. They were so charmed with Janak's capital that their own realms seemed to them as nothing worth. They gaze with astonishment at the pavilions and all the marvellous decorations ; at the men and women so beautiful and well-formed, so good and amiable and intelligent, before whom all the gods and goddesses seemed like the stars at the rising of the full moon. Above all was Bráhma astounded at finding his own handiwork nowhere.

Dohi 320.

But Siva admonished them all :—" Do not give way to such surprise ; recover yourselves and reflect that this is the marriage of Síta and Raghubír,

Chaupái 319.

The mere mention of whose name destroys all that is evil in the world ; in whose hand are the four great ends of human life ; such are Síta and Ráma, says Love's destroyer." When Sambhu had thus admonished the gods, he again urged on his noble bull. Beholding Dasarath march forth, their soul was full of joy and their limbs trembled. The crowd of saints and Bráhmans who accompanied him seemed like incarnate gods ministering to him. In the midst shone forth the beautiful boys as it were final Beatitude manifested in its four phases.¹ As they gazed on the pair, of golden and sapphire hue, the gods were moved with violent love, and especially were they delighted at the sight of Ráma, and glorified the king and rained down flowers.

Dohú 321.

Again and again as Umá and Mahádeva fixed their gaze upon Ráma, all-perfect in beauty from head to foot, their body trembled and their eyes filled with tears.

1 The four grades or phases of *apavarga*, i. e., final beatitude, are *salohatá*, residence in the same heaven as god ; *sarupata* being in the same form as god ; *samáipyata*, being in actual contact with god ; and *sayujyata*, complete absorption into god.

Chaupái 320.

On his body, dark as a peacock's glistening neck his bright raiment outshone the lightning; his wedding adornments of every kind were most exquisitely fashioned; his face more lustrous than a cloudless autumn moon; his eyes more brilliant than the lotus; his beauty, in short, so marvellous that no words can describe how it moved the soul. By his side shone forth his charming brother, making his mettlesome steed plunge and bound on the way, as also did all the attendant princes; while the family bards recited the glories of their line. As the king of the birds noted the action of the horse that Ráma bestrode, he blushed for shame; for its beauty was beyond all telling, as it might be Kámadeva himself in equine disguise.

Chhand 35.

As though Kámadeva himself in his love for Ráma had assumed an equine disguise, of such resplendent beauty as to charm all creation with his youth and vigour and form and points and paces. A saddle flashed its splendours on his back, thick set with pearls and rubies; bridle too and band gleamed bright with jewels that dazzled the gaze of men, saints and gods.

Dohá 322.

Obedient in every movement to the will of its lord, the gallant steed was as beautiful as a peacock, that dances in response to a thunder-cloud, whose dark mass is irradiated by the stars of heaven and the fitful lightning.

Chaupái 321.

But not Sáradá herself could do justice to the noble steed on which Ráma rode. Sankara was enchanted with his beauty, and congratulated himself on having fifteen eyes. When Hari affectionately gazed on Ráma he and Lakshmi were both equally charmed; while Bráhma rejoiced to behold his beauty, and regretted that he had only eight eyes. Kártikeya exulted greatly that in the matter of eyes he was half as well off again as Bráhma. When wise Indra looked at Ráma, he thought Gautam's curse a great blessing;

and all the gods broke out in Indra's praise, saying :—'To-day there is no one like him.'¹ All heaven was delighted at the sight of Rāma, and there was joy above measure in the court of both the kings.

Chhand 36.

There was exceeding joy in both royal courts; the welkin resounded with multitudinous kettledrums; the gods rained down flowers and shouted in their joy,—'Glory, glory, glory to Raghu's noble son.' In this manner when they learnt that the procession was approaching, all sorts of music began to play, and the queen gave orders to her handmaids to prepare the auspicious materials for the lustral rite.

Dohā 323.

With many lights and torches and festal preparations of every kind, a bevy of graceful dames proceeded joyously to celebrate the lustral rite.

Chandī 322.

With fawn-like eyes and face of moonlike brightness, each one was beautiful enough to rob Rati of all self-conceit. Attired in costly garments of different colours, covered all over with ornaments and rendered beautiful in every limb, they sang more melodiously than the *kail* to the music of the bells on their wrists and waist and feet, as they moved, with all the undulating grace of a wild elephant. All kinds of music played, and there were rejoicings both in heaven and in the city. Indrāni, Sārādā, Lakshmi and Bhavāni the wisest of all the queens of heaven, assumed the disguise of woman's form, and flocked to the king's seraglio, singing delightfully with divine voice; and for joy there was no one who recognized them.

Chhand 37.

In their ecstatic joy as they went to receive the bridegroom with melodious song and sweet music, who could tell

¹ The reason being that Indra has a thousand eyes.

who was who ? the gods showered down flowers and everything was delightful. As they gazed upon the bridegroom, the source of bliss, they were all glad of heart, their lotus eyes overflowed with tears and their every limb quivered with rapture.

Dohá 324.

The joy of Sítá's mother on beholding Ráma's gallant appearance was more than a thousand Sáradás and Seshnágs could tell in a hundred ages.

Chaupái 323.

Restraining her tears out of regard for the suspiciousness of the event, the queen with gladness of heart performed the lustral rite, and diligently completed the entire ceremony in accordance with Vedic prescription and family usage. The five kinds of music ¹ were accompanied by festal chanting, and rich carpets of different sorts were spread upon the ground. After the lustral rite and the oblation Ráma proceeded to the pavilion. So great was the splendour and magnificence of Dasarath and his retinue that Indra was put to shame by it. From time to time the gods rained down flowers, while the Bráhmans repeated the appropriate propitiatory texts. ² There was much jubilation on the earth and in heaven that no one could hear himself speak, much less any one else. In this manner Ráma entered the pavilion, where the libation was offered and he was conducted to his throne.

Chhand 38.

When the bridegroom was seated on the throne and the lustral rite was performed, all rejoiced at the sight, scattering around him jewels and raiment and ornaments in profusion,

¹ The five kinds of music are as follows ; the *tántri* or sitára ; the *túl* ; the *jhánjh*, or cymbals ; the *nakúra*, or kettledrum ; and fifthly, the trumpet, fife or other wind instrument

² The prayer, or propitiatory text, ordinarily known by the name of *sánti* is as follows: *Om. Sanno Mitrah sum Varunah sanno bhuvatearyama sanno Indro Frihaspathi sanno Vishnur urukramah namo Brahmane namaste Vayo twan eva pratyaksham Brahmásitwam eva pratyaksham Bráhma vadishyámi ritam vadishyámi satyam vadishyámi tan mām avatu tat vaktar am avatavatu mām avatu vaktāram. Om. Sántis sántis sántih.*

while women sang festal songs. Bráhma and all the other gods disguised as noble Bráhmans witnessed the spectacle, and as they gazed on the glorious sun of the lotus race of Raghu, reckoned it the happiest moment of their life.

Dohá 325.

The barber and torch-maker and singers and dancers, who gathered up the offerings that had been scattered about Ráma,¹ bowed their head and invoked blessings upon him from a heart that was bursting with joy.

Chaupáí 324.

Janak and Dasarath joined most affectionately in the observance of every custom, whether religious or secular ; and the royal pair were so glorious a sight that the poet, searching whereto to liken them and finding nothing, must acknowledge himself defeated and admit that they were comparable only to themselves. The gods beheld with delight the two fathers and rained down flowers and sang their praises:—‘ Since Bráhma first created the world, we have seen and heard of many marriages, but never till this day have we seen a match so perfect in all respects, and two such well-matched fathers.’ At the sound of this voice from heaven so gracious and yet so true, there was on both sides a marvellous access of love. Janak led the way with due honours to the pavilion, offering libations and unrolling a carpet as he went.

1 The custom of distributing pieces of money among the crowd is still kept up by rich Muhammadan families at wedding festivals, and special coins for the purpose were struck by Jahangir and others of the Delhi Emperors. These are called *nísár*, while the word used by Tulsi D's here and in many other places, is *nichhícarí*. The resemblance is so close that the Hindi might easily be a corruption of the Arabic. But it seems improbable that such a thoroughly Indian custom should not have an indigenous name ; and further, the derivation of *nichhícarí* would appear to be from the Sanskrit root *kship*, ‘to throw,’ with the prefix *ni*, ‘down.’ Mr. Bate, in his Hindi Dictionary forms it from *niyam plus kshay plus var*; but this can scarcely be accepted as a very plausible explanation. Anyhow the word does not look like a foreign importation. As to the etymology of *nísár*, I must leave Arabic scholars to speak ; but if there is no connection between the two words, the coincidence in sound and meaning is at least curious. Should there be no earlier authority than Tulsi D's for *nichhícarí* it might be a mere adaptation, such as has converted *intik'íl* into *ant kál*; *bíl íjmál* into *Brij mál*, and has helped to popularize many other unintelligible terms of legal phraseology.

Chhand 39.

Beholding the beauty of the manifold decorations of the pavilion, even the saints were astonished ; but the wise Janak with his own hands conducted them all to their seats. Paying the same honour and respect to Vasishtha as to his own patron divinity, he received his blessing ; but the supreme devotion with which he greeted Visvamitra was of a kind that surpasses description.

Dohá 326.

With great joy the king did homage to Vámadeva too and the other saints, and gave them all exalted thrones and received their blessing.

Chaupái 325.

Again he did homage to the lord of Kosala, taking him to be the peer of Mahádeva, yea, none other ; with clasped hands and in humble phrase extolling him and enlarging on his own marvellous good fortune. Then to all the wedding-guests he paid the same homage in every respect as to the bridegroom's father, and assigned them all appropriate seats. How can I with my 'one tongue describe all the pageant. With gifts and compliments and profuse apologies Janak did the honours to all his guests. Bráhma, Vishnu, Mahádeva, the eight guardians of the world¹ and the god of day, who knew Raghubír's glory, disguised themselves as learned Bráhmans and were delighted spectators of the festivities. Janak, though he recognized them not, paid them homage as gods and led them to exalted seats.

Chhand 40.

Who could tell who 'was who, when there was no one who could answer even for himself. As they gazed on the bridegroom, the root of joy, joy was diffused on all sides. When

¹ The guardians of the eight quarters of the world are Indra, of the east; Agni, of the south-east ; Yama, of the south ; Nirriti, of the south-west ; Várma of the west; Víya or Marut, of the north-west; Kuvera, of the north; Isana, or Siva, of the north-east. Some lists substitute Súrya, 'the sun,' and Chandra or Soma, 'the Moon,' for Nirriti and Isana : others again give the Sun and Moon and the Six Planets.—*Monier Williams*.

he saw the gods, the all-wise Râma assigned them what seats they fancied; and the heavenly powers were delighted to behold the gracious manner of their lord.

Dohâ 327.

As the partridge drinks in the light of the moon, so their eyes reverently drank in the beauty of Râma's face with the utmost rapture.

Chaupâi 326.

Perceiving that the time had arrived, Vasishtha called, and Satâmand came with ready obedience. "Go now and quickly bring the bride." On receiving this order the saint went gladly, and on hearing his message the queen with all her attendants was delighted, and sent for the Brâhman ladies and the elders of the tribe, and with songs of joy performed all the family rites. The goddesses, who were disguised as women, were all so amiable and lovely, in the first bloom of their youth,¹ that the ladies were charmed to see them, and, though not recognizing them, held them more dear than life. Again and again the queen did them honour accounting them equals of Umâ, Râma and Sârâdâ. After dressing Sita and forming in procession they joyously conducted her to the pavilion.

Chhand 41.

Reverently and with auspicious pomp her attendant ladies conducted Sita, each of them of lovely form and superbly adorned, moving with the voluptuous grace of a young elephant. At the sound of their melodious strains the saints forgot their meditations, the god of love and the *kôil* were abashed; while the bells on their anklets and gleaming girdles rang out with the cymbals a delightful accompaniment as they moved.

¹ Hindus of the olden time had a perfect mania for classifying and defining, and have invented divisions and sub-divisions of every conceivable group of objects, with a definite technical name for each variety. Thus the word in the text, here translated 'in the bloom of youth,' is *syâmâ*, which is strictly defined 'as a woman from eight to sixteen years of age, resembling in complexion the blossom of Priyangu and its slender stalk in shape.' There are many other varieties of the sex, that have their distinctive marks specified with equal minuteness.

Dohá 328.

Among her maidens Síta shines forth in native loveliness,
like Bliss personified among the Graces.

Chaupái 327.

Her beauty is indescribable, so great is it and so little
my wit. When the wedding guests saw her approach, so
exquisitely charming and every way divine, they all did
homage to her from their inmost soul. At the sight of her,
Ráma was filled with love, and Dasarath and his sons were glad
of heart beyond all telling. The gods did homage and rained
down flowers; the saints gave their blessings in auspicious
wise; there was a confused noise of singing and playing and
general rejoicing throughout the city. In this manner Síta
arrived at the pavilion, while the great saints joyously recited
the set forms of prayer and the two family *gurus* performed
all the due rites and ceremonies.

Chhand 42—43.

After the ceremonies the *gurus* directed the glad Bráhmans
to worship Gauri and Ganes: the gods in visible form
accepted the homage and gave their blessing, which they
received with joy. Whatever dainty dish or condiment any
holy man fancied at any time was at once supplied him by
the table-attendants in plates and bowls of gold. Having
reverently and dutifully performed all family rites in accordance
with the Sun-god's prescription, and offered homage
to the gods, they conducted Síta to her glorious throne. The
mutual love with which Síta and Ráma regarded each other
was too much to look upon; it exceeds all sense, or intelligence,
or speech, or perception; how then can the poet express it?

Dohá 329.

At the time of the burnt sacrifice, the Fire-god in person
most graciously accepted the oblation, and all the Vedas in
the guise of Bráhmans uttered the marriage formularies.

Chharp 9 323.

What words can describe Janak's illustrious queen-consort, Sita's mother, in whose composition the Creator had combined the perfection of glory, piety, happiness and beauty? At the due time the saints called her, and she came responsive to the summons with her attendant maidens. Then shone forth Sumayana at Janak's left hand, as Maina beside Himālaya. With their own hands the glad king and queen take and place before Rāma golden vases and costly jewelled trays full of holy water and delicious perfumes. The saints with auspicious voices recite the Veda, and at the proper time the heaven rains flowers, while the father and mother of the bride look on in rapture and begin to wash the holy feet.

Chhetul 14--17.

Their whole frame quivering with excess of love, they began to lave the lotus feet; while both in heaven and in the city there were singing and music and shouts of victory bursting forth and overflowing in all directions. The lotus feet that ever gleam in the lake of Siva's bosom; by meditating upon which for a single moment every impurity of the soul and defilement of this wicked world is removed; by whose touch the sage's guilty wife attained salvation; whose honeyed fragrance, as the gods declare, is ever present on Sambhu's head; on which the bee-like soul of saints and ascetics ever dwells ere they reach the heaven of their desire; these holy feet are bathed by Janak, 'midst the glad acclaim of all. The two family priests join the hands of the bride and bridegroom and recite their descent. The mystic union is completed, and at the sight Brāhma and all gods and men and saints were full of joy. As the bride's parents gazed on the gracious bridegroom, both their soul and body were raptured with delight; and having completed every family and scriptural observance, the glorious monarch gave his daughter to her lord. As Himālaya gave Girijā to Mahādeva, and as Ocean

gave Lakshmi to Vishnu, in like manner did Janak bestow Síta on Ráma, and creation was glorified anew. After stationing the happy pair on one spot (the bride so fair of hue, the groom so dark) and performing the sacrifice with all due rite, and tying the knot, the circumambulation commenced.

Dohá 330.

At the sound of the huzzas and minstrelsy and the recitation of the Veda and the auspicious chanting and the music, the all-wise gods were delighted and rained down flowers from the tree of paradise.

Chaupái 329.

The bride and bridegroom with measured paces performed the circumambulation, while all present feasted their adoring gaze on the spectacle. The beauty of the happy pair is not to be described; whatever comparison might be suggested would fall short of the reality. The lovely images of Ráma and Síta were reflected in the jewelled pillars, and sparkled like incarnations of Kámadeva and Rati, who had come to witness Ráma's glorious wedding and, from mingled curiosity and bashfulness, at one moment showed themselves openly and at another retired out of sight. All the spectators were enraptured and like Janak forgot all about themselves. Joyously the saints bade them pace the circle round; the rite was accomplished and the marriage offerings made. Ráma applied the vermilion to Síta's forehead, brilliant beyond all description; and his arm seemed like a serpent thirsting for ambrosia, as it decorated her moonlike face with the red powder that filled his lotus hand. Then by Vasishta's direction the bride and bridegroom took their seat together.

Chhand 48—51.

When Ráma and Jánaki took their seat, Dasarath's soul was rejoiced and his frame quivered with emotion, as again and again he fixed his gaze upon them and saw as it were his own virtue like the tree of paradise blossoming anew. There

was rejoicing all over the world at the news of Rāma's wedding, how can it be described? I have but one tongue in my head, while the joy had no bounds. Then Janak, having received Vasishtha's order, provided all things necessary for the marriage ceremonial, and summoned the three maidens, Māndavi, Srutikīrti, and Urmilā. After affectionately performing every rite, the king gave first to Bharat in marriage the beautiful and accomplished daughter of Kusaketu. Then next with all honour Janak bestowed upon Lakshman Jānaki's lovely younger sister; and finally gave away to Ripu-sūdan the bright-eyed and charming Sruti-kīrti, no less amiable than beautiful. As bride and bridegroom modestly gazed on each other and noticed the contrast,¹ they were glad of heart; while every one delightedly applauded the beauty of the scene, and the gods rained down flowers. All equally beautiful, though diverse in hue, they shone resplendent in the pavilion, as though the four states of life with their several lords had met in one living soul.

Dohā 331.

The king of Avadh gazed with delight on his four sons and their brides; as though that jewel of monarchs had in them realized the four methods of religion and the four cognate ends of life.²

Chaupāi 330.

All the princes were married with the same rites as I have described for Rāma. The enormous dowry was beyond description; the whole pavilion was full of gold and jewels. Shawls, robes and silks of all kinds in the greatest profusion and of immense value; elephants, chariots, horses, menservants,

1 Rāma and Bharat being dark were married to Jānaki and Māndavi who were fair; while the fair bridegrooms, Lakshman and Satrugna were wedded to the dark brides, Urmilā and Sruti-kīrti.

2 The *chār phal*, i.e., the four fruits or ends of life, are, as has been before explained, *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma* and *Moksha*, which are here compared to Dasarath's four sons. The four brides are likened to the *chār kriyā*, or four methods of religion, which are either *Sevā* *Sraddha*, *Tapasya* and *Bhakti*, that is to say, obedience, piety, penance and faith; or according to another enumeration, *anushikāna*, religious ceremonial; *udযোগ*, diligence; *rati* love; and *virati*, detachment from the world.

and cows with gilded horns and hoofs, as beautiful as the cow of plenty ; things so many that no one could count them, nor credit their number if he had not seen them. At the sight the guardians of the world broke out into praises of the dowry, and Avadh's king received it all most graciously. To every one who asked was given whatever he desired, and what remained over was taken to the guests' quarters. Then with folded hands and bated breath Janak courteously entreated all the bridegroom's party.

Chhand 52—55.

After courteously entreating all the marriage guests with high ceremony, gifts, apologies and compliments, he joyfully proceeded with much devotion to do his humble homage to the saintly throng. With bowed head he propitiated the gods, and thus, with hands clasped in prayer, addressed them all,—‘ Gods and saints desire only a good will ; can Ocean’s wants be satisfied by a libation of a few drops?’¹ Again with clasped hands Janak and his brother spoke to the king of Kosala, with winning words full of love and amiability :—“ O king, I am greatly ennobled by your alliance ; know that my realm and all that I have is freely yours to command. Take these girls as your hand-maidens and graciously protect them, and pardon me my sin and presumption in inviting you.” The glory of the Solar race in turn addressed his royal cousin in terms of highest honour ; their courtesy was past all telling, and the love that overflowed their hearts. The deities rained down flowers as the monarch proceeded to the guest-chamber, midst the crash of kettledrums, the muttered recitation of the Veda, and glad rejoicings both on earth and in heaven. Then by the saint’s command and singing auspicious strains as they went, the fair ladies of the court conducted to the marriage pavilion the bridegrooms and their brides.

¹ Yet though it derives no benefit from a such scanty offering, it both demands and accepts it;

Dohá 332.

Again and again did Síta gaze upon Ráma with modest mien, but full of confidence at heart; and her eyes athirst with love outshone the fish in Kámadeva's blazon.

Chandú 331.

Dark in hue and full of untaught grace, his beauty put to shame a myriad Loves; his lac-stained feet gleamed like some lotus, the haunt of bee-like saintly souls; his pure and lustrous yellow robe outshone the rising sun or lightning-flash; and the little bells on his waistbelt made delicious tinkling; long were his arms and clasped with glittering bangles; his yellow *janeu* set him off to perfection; his signet ring would ravish all hearts; lustrous were all his many wedding adornments and the stars and collars on his broad breast; across his shoulders a yellow scarf with fringe of gems and pearls; with lotus eyes and bright pendants from his ears and a face the very store-house of beauty; lovely brows and charming nose, and on his forehead a most bewitching spot, while on his head the auspicious marriage-crown shone glorious with knotted pearls and gems.

Chhand 56—59.

The knoted gems and the crown and his comely person ravished all hearts; and not a woman or goddess in heaven or earth who did not break a blade of grass¹ at the sight of his beauty. After scattering round about him jewels and raiment and adornments they perform the lustral rite, singing auspicious songs, while the gods rain down flowers, and bards, minstrels and rhapsodists declare his glory. When the bride and bridegroom entered the marriage pavilion, great was the joy of the attendants, who with festive songs and in most lovingwise began to perform the accustomed observances. Gauri herself taught Ráma, and Sáradá told Síta how to manage the mess of rice-milk; and all the ladies

¹ Either involuntarily from agitation and bashfulness, or as a charm to avert the evil eye, or to show how little they valued anything in the world in comparison with his beauty.

of the seraglio were so taken with the merry sport that they reckoned it the happiest moment of their lives. When Jánaki saw in the gems on her fingers the reflection of the all-beautiful, she dared not move her eyes or lithesome arm for fear of losing his presence. The rapture of delight, the ecstasy of love surpassed all telling ; only those happy dames could comprehend it who escorted the bride and bridegroom to the guest-house. Then might be heard on all sides blessings and great exultation in heaven and on earth and a universal shout of joy :—‘Long life to the four happy couples.’

Dohí 333.

Hermits, saints and sages, the gods too on beholding their lord, sounded their kettledrums and returned in gladness, each to his own realm, raining down flowers and crying ‘Victory.’ Then the four princes with their brides approached their father, and such was the glory, the felicity and the rapture that it seemed to overflow the court like a torrent.

Chaupí 332.

Again there was a magnificent banquet, to which Janak sent and invited all the visitors. Carpets of richest stuff were spread as the king sallied forth with his sons. After reverently washing his guests’ feet, he seated them all according to their rank. First Janak bathed the feet of Avadh’s lord with a loving devotion past all telling ; then he bathed Ráma’s lotus feet, feet ever enshrined in Mahádeva’s heart ; and, also with his own hands, bathed the feet of the three brothers, regarding them as Ráma’s peers. To all the king assigned appropriate seats, and then gave his orders to the cooks, who with due ceremony set out the dishes, made all of jewels instead of leaves, and stitched with golden pins.

Dohá 334.

The quick and obsequious waiting-men passed round, and in a moment every guest was supplied with rice and condiments and fragrant butter, and everything luscious and savoury and nice.

Chaupái 333.

After making the five oblations,¹ they began to eat listening with delight the while to allusive songs. There were confections of many kinds, sweeter than nectar or than words can tell, which the well-trained waiters handed round, and such an infinite variety of sauces that no one could remember all their names, with food of the four kinds mentioned in the sacred books and an indescribable variety of each kind, and seasoning of the six flavours, and each flavour exhibited in a countless number of dishes. As the banquet proceeded, jests were bandied about in pleasant wise, and not a man or woman but heard his name brought in. Louder and broader grew the raillery of the festive hour, and the king and the whole assembly were moved to laughter as they listened. In this manner they all feasted, then punctiliously rinsed out the mouth :

Dohá 335.

And Janak in due form presented Dasarath and all his guests with *pán*, and the glorious king then retired to his own apartment.

Chaupái 334.

There was ever some new rejoicing in the city, and the whole day and night seemed gone like a minute. At early dawn the best of monarchs woke, and mendicants began to chant his praises. As he gazed upon the gallant princes and their brides, the rapture of his soul was beyond all telling. After performing his morning devotions he went to his *guru*, with his heart full of love and exultation and clasping his hands in prayer bowed before him and said with a voice of mellifluous sweetness :—"Hearken, king of saints ; it is by your favour that to-day my toils have been rewarded. Now holy father, summon the Bráhmans and present them all with cows with costly adornments." On hearing these words the *guru* much applauded the king, and sent to summon the whole saintly throng.

¹ The five vital airs to which oblations are made are *prána*, *upána*, *smána*, *vyána* and *udána*.

Dohá 336.

Then came Vámadeva and Nárad and Válmíki and Jábáli and Visvamitra and all the other great saints and ascetics.

Chaupái 335.

The king threw himself upon the ground before them all and worshipped them, and then conducted them to seats of honour. Next he sent for 400,000 cows, all as gentle and beautiful as the cow of paradise, and after decorating them in every possible way bestowed them with great joy upon the saints, with many a phrase of studied humility, declaring it to be the happiest day of his whole life. On receiving their blessing the king, the pride of the solar race, rejoiced, and next sent for all the begging fraternity and gave them, according as each desired, gold, or apparel, or jewels, or horses or elephants, or chariots. They all left loudly telling and singing his praises:—‘glory, glory, glory, to the lord of the Sun-gods’s race.’ Such were the rejoicings at Ráma’s wedding; beyond all that could be told even had I a thousand tongues.

Dohá 337.

Again and again the lord bowed his head at Visvamitra’s feet:—“All this happiness, O king of saints, is the result of your benignant regard.”

Chaupái 336.

King Dasarath spent the whole night extolling Janak’s affection¹ and amiability and magnificence; every day on rising he asked permission to return home, but Janak would lovingly detain him. There was constantly some new fête in his honour, and every day a thousand different kinds of entertainment. The rejoicings in the city never flagged, and no one liked to think of Dasarath’s departure. In this manner many days were spent, and the guests were fast bound by the cords of love, till Visvamitra and Satánand went and told Videha’s lord:—“You must now let Dasarath take his

¹ The line, which I translate, stands thus : *nrip sab ráti saráhat lúti*
Another reading is *nrik sab bhánti saráhat bibhúti*,

leave, even though you cannot part with your love for him." The king replied:—"It is well," and summoned his ministers, who came and bowed the head crying:—"All hail!"

Dohá 338.

"Make it known in the palace that Avadh's lord wishes to depart." At these words the ministers, Bráhmans, counsellors and princes were greatly moved.

Chaupái 337.

When it was noised in the city that the guests were leaving, every one anxiously asked his neighbour if it were a fact. When they heard they were actually going all were as unhappy as a lotus that fades in the evening. Every place where the visitors had put up on their arrival was crowded with parting presents,¹ fruits and confections of every kind, and dishes too various for description. A multitude of porters laden with wearing apparel² and cooks beyond number were sent by Janak with 100,000 horses and 25,000 chariots all exquisitely finished throughout, with 10,000 powerful elephants duly caparisoned, at sight of which earth's guardian elephants would feel ashamed of themselves, besides wagons full of gold and raiment and jewels; buffaloes also and cows, and things of all kinds.

Dohá 339.

The dowry, moreover, given by Videha's king was immeasurable and beyond all telling; and Indra, had he seen it, would have thought the riches of the universe as nothing in comparison.

Chaupái 338.

When the whole equipage had been thus arranged, Janak despatched it to Avadh. On hearing that the guests were about to start, all the queens were as unhappy as fish when water fails. Again and again they clasped Síta to their bosom and blessed and

¹ The word *sidh* probably stands for *sidhya* 'auspicious,' though it might be for *sidhu*, wine.

² For *basan* 'wearing apparel,' some copies read *basah*, 'oxen.'

exhorted her, saying: "May you ever be beloved by your husband, and with him live a long and happy life; this is my blessing. Be obedient to your new father and mother and guru, and regarding your lord's displeasure¹ do as he bids." Her sweet-voiced companions, too, in their overpowering affection reminded her of woman's crowning duty. Again and again after thus duly admonishing them the queens clasped the four brides to their bosom, and time after time, in the midst of their maternal embraces, exclaimed :—"Why has God made women?"

Dohá 340.

Then came the joyous Rāma, the glory of the Solar race, with his brothers, to Janak's palace to take leave.

Chaupái 339.

All the people of the city, whether men or women, ran to see the four brothers so lovely and so unaffected. Said one:—"To-day they have made up their mind to go, and Janak has completed all the preparations for their departure; so feast your eyes on their beauty for the last time. All four princes have been most welcome visitors; who can say; friend, what we have done to deserve that god should bring our eyes such guests. Like a man at the point of death who is given ambrosia; or as one who has been hungry all his life and discovers the tree of paradise; or as one of the damned in hell who approaches Hari's feet, so am I after seeing them. Gaze upon Rāma's beauty and treasure his image in your heart, as it were the jewel in a serpent's hood" In this manner the princes gladdened the eyes of all as they proceeded to the palace.

Dohá 341.

The ladies all rose in their joy as they beheld their exquisite beauty; and the mothers of the brides, in token of their delight, pass the lustral lamp around their heads and scatter gifts.

¹ In this line *rūkh* may be the Persian word meaning 'face'; but it is more probably the Sanskrit *rūsh*, 'displeasure.'

Chaupái 340.

Full of love at the vision of Râma's beauty, they affectionately fall at his feet again and again, nor are conscious of shame; so rapt is their soul in devotion and an involuntary attachment beyond all description. After bathing him and his brothers and rubbing his body with cosmetics, they lovingly entertain him at a banquet of the six flavours. Then seeing that the time had come, Râma said to them in the most amiable, loving and modest tone : "The king is desirous of starting for Avadh and has sent us to take leave of you. O mother, be pleased to give me your commands and ever regard me with affection as your own child." at these words the queens grieved sore and were too overcome by love to speak a word, but clasped their daughters to their bosom and then meekly gave them to their lords.

Chhand 60.

Meekly her mother surrendered Sîta to Râma, crying again and again with hands clasped in prayer :—" Ah, my son, you, I ween, are all-wise, and to you are apparent the thought of all men. Know well that Sîta is dear as life to the king and myself, nay, to all her kinsfolk and all the people of the city ; consider her amiability and her affection and accept her as your own servant.

Sorathâ 30.

You are the fulness of desire, the crown of wisdom, the beloved of the universe, quick to recognize merit in your votaries, destroyer of evil, Râma the all-merciful."

Chaupái 341.

So saying, the queens still clung to his feet and their voice seemed lost as it were in the quicksands of love. On hearing their most affectionate address, Râma showed them the highest honour, and with clasped hands begged his congé again and again making them obeisance. When he had received their blessing, he bowed once more and then with his brothers took his leave. Treasuring up his sweet and

gracious image in their heart, the queens at first seemed paralyzed by excess of love : but summoning up courage they called their daughters and again and again gave them a maternal embrace : then leading them a few steps would take them to their arms yet again with ever-growing mutual love. Time after time they left their attendants for yet one more last embrace, as a heifer not yet weaned from the cow.

Dohá 342.

Every one in the palace, attendant and all, were so overpowered by emotion that it seemed as though they had made the city of Videha the very home of piteousness and lovers' partings.

Chaupái 342.

The pet parrots and *mainas*, that Jánaki had kept in golden cages and taught to speak, cry in their agitation :— 'Where is the prince?' and, on hearing, which of them was not robbed of all peace of mind? When birds and beasts were thus distressed, how can the feelings of the people be told? Then came Janak with his brother (Kusa-dhvaja) overflowing with love and his eyes full of tears. As he gazed upon Sita, all his courage deserted him and his eminent asceticism lasted but in name. As he clasped Jánaki to his bosom the stronghold of his stern philosophy was broken down. All his wise counsellors admonished him ; and seeing the unfitness of the time he recovered himself, and again and again taking his daughter to his heart he ordered a gorgeous *pálky* to be got ready.

Dohá 343.

The whole court was overpowered with emotion, when the king, perceiving that the auspicious moment had arrived, seated the bride in the *pálki*, with his thoughts intent upon Ganes, the author of success.

Chaupái 343.

The monarch gave his daughter much advice and instructed her in the whole duty of women and in family cus-

toms. He bestowed upon her many men-servants and maid-servants and all her own favourite attendants. As she went on her way the citizens were in distress, but all good signs and auspicious omens were forthcoming. Bráhmans and ministers with all their retinue joined company to escort the Rája. The wedding-guests made ready their chariots and elephants and horses, and there was a tumultuous noise of music. Then Dasarath called up all the Bráhmans and gratified them with gifts and compliments, and putting the dust of their lotus feet upon his head rejoiced—great king as he was—to obtain their benison. As he set forth on his way with his thoughts on Ganeś, every omen of good occurred.

Dohá 344.

The gods rained down flowers, the heavenly nymphs sang for joy, as the king of Avadh set forth for his capital 'midst the clash of jubilant music.

Chaupái 344.

Courteously the king dismissed the burghers and reverently bade all the mendicants approach and bestowed upon them ornaments and clothes and horses and elephants, and affectionately cherishing them made them stand up before him. After again and again reciting his praises they turned home with Ráma in their heart. Though Kosala's lord spoke time after time, Janak in his exceeding love would not turn back. Once more said the king in gracious tones:—"I beg you to turn back, sire; you have come a great distance." At last he dismounted and remained standing, his eyes overflowing with love's torrent. Then said Videha's lord with folded hands and in a voice fraught with the ambrosia of affection:—"How can I fitly express my unworthiness, on whom my lord has conferred such high honour?"

Dohá 345.

Kosala's king in return showed the profoundest respect to the father of the bride and his retinue; and as they embraced with mutual courtesy their heart could not contain the love they felt.

Chaupái 345.

Janak bowed his head to the throng of saints and received a blessing from all. Next he reverently saluted his sons-in-law, the four brothers, each a treasure of beauty, amiability and accomplishments : and clasping his gracious lotus hands he cried in accents begotten of love:—" O Ráma how can I tell thy praise ; swan of the Mánas lake of the saints and Mahádeva's souls ; for whose sake ascetics practise their asceticism ; devoid of anger, infatuation, selfishness and pride ; the all-pervading Brahm, the invisible, the immortal, the supreme spirit, at once the sum and negation of all qualities ; whom neither words nor fancy can pourtray ; whom all philosophy fails to expound ; whose greatness the divine oracles declare unutterable, and who remainest the selfsame in all time, past, present, or future?

Dohá 346.

Source of every joy, thou hast revealed thyself to my material vision ; for nothing in the world is beyond the reach of him to whom God is propitious.

Chaupái 346.

Thou hast magnified me in every way, and recognizing me as one of thy servants hast made me thy very own. Not ten thousand Sáradás and Seslnágs, though they kept up their count for a myriad ages, could tell all my good fortune or thy perfections ; know this, O Raghunáth ; yet I have somewhat to say—for I have this ground of confidence that thou art easily appeased by the slightest evidence of affection—and therefore time after time I implore with clasped hands that never may my soul be deluded into deserting thy feet." On hearing these excellent sentiments, the true birth of devotion, even Ráma, in whom all pleasure ever dwells, was pleased and with much courtesy saluted his father-in-law, holding him equal to his own sire, or Visvamitra, or Vasishta. Next he bowed himself before Bharat and affectionately embraced him and gave him his blessing.

Dohá 347.

Then the king embraced and blessed both Lakshman and Satrugna, and all again and again bowed the head, being overpowered with mutual love.

Chaupái 347.

At last, after many courtesies and flattering speeches, Ráma and his brothers proceeded on their way. Then went Janak and clasped Visvamitra by the feet and put the dust of his feet on his head and eyes:—"Hearken, O greatest of saints; now that I have seen you, I am persuaded that nothing is beyond my attainment. Such bliss and glory as the sovereigns of the universe might desire, though they would be ashamed to express their longing, has all, my lord, been brought within my reach, for all prosperity follows upon seeing you." After again and again humbly bowing the head, the king received his blessing and took leave. The marriage procession set forth to the sound of music, and the whole populace, great and small, were all enraptured and, as they gazed upon Ráma and feasted their eyes upon him, were happy for life,

Dohá 348.

Halting at convenient stages on the road, to the great delight of the people, the procession, on an auspicious day drew near to Avadh.

Chaupái 348.

'Midst the beat of kettledrums and noise of many tabors and sackbuts and conches, and a din of horses and elephants, and clash of cymbals and drums and sweet-tuned clarions, when the citizens heard the procession coming, they were all in a tremor of delight, and every one began to decorate his own house and the markets and streets and squares and gates of the city. The whole roadway was watered with perfumes; on every side were festal squares filled in with elegant devices; the show in the bazar was beyond all telling, with wreaths and

flags and banners and canopies. Trees of the areca-nut and the plantain and the mango, the *málsari*, the *kudamb* and the *tamála*, were transplanted all laden with fruit, and grew into fine trees as soon as they touched the soil, being set in jewelled screens of exquisite workmanship.

Dohá 349.

In house after house festal vases of every kind were ranged in order, and Bráhma and all the gods were delighted as they gazed upon the city of Ráma.

Champi 349.

At that time the king's palace was so resplendent that the god of love was distracted by the sight of such magnificence. It was as though everything auspicious and of good omen and all beauty, all plenteousness and prosperity and joy and felicity and gladness had come in bodily form to visit King Dasarath. There was a universal longing to get a sight of Ráma and Jánaki. Troops of fair women were crowding together, each exceeding in loveliness the Love-god's queen, all with festal offerings and torches and singing, as it were so many Sarasvatis. The rejoicings in the palace at that glad time are beyond all description. Ráma's mother Kausalyá and the other queens were too overcome with love to think about themselves.

Dohá 350.

They bestowed large gifts upon the Bráhmans, after worshipping Ganes and Mahádeva, and were as rejoiced as Poverty would be on finding the four great prizes of life.

Champi 350.

Each royal mother was so overcome with love and delight that her feet refused to walk and the whole body was paralyzed. Greatly longing for a sight of Ráma, they all began preparing the lustral lamps. Instruments of music were played in various modes, as the glad Sumitrá arranged her auspicious offering of turmeric, *dúbb* grass, curds, sprigs and flowers, *pán*, betelnut and well-favoured roots, rice,

blades of wheat, yellow pigment, parched grain, and bunches of the graceful *tulsi* in embossed golden vases, so exquisitely beautiful that they seemed like nests made for Love's own birdlings. The auspicious offerings and the perfumes were beyond all telling : there was nothing of good omen which each one of the queens had not prepared. With lustral lights arranged in various devices they sing for joy melodious festal strains.

Dohá 351.

With golden salvers in their lotus hands, laden with their offerings, and their body quivering with emotion, the queens go forth with joy to perform the lustration.

Chaupái 351.

The heaven was darkened with the fumes of incense, as though overhung with Sávan's densest thunderclouds : the gods rained down garlands of flowers from the tree of paradise which seemed to the beholders as cranes in graceful flight ; the lustrous jewelled festoons resembled the rainbow ; the maidens on the house-tops, now in sight and now out of sight, were like the fitful flashes of lightning ; the beat of the drums was as the crash of thunder ; the beggars as clamorous, as the cuckoos and the frogs and peacocks ; the sweet perfumes were as copious showers of rain, and all the people of the city like the freshened pastures. Seeing that the time had arrived, the *guru* gave the word, and the glory of Raghu's line made his entry into the city, mindful at heart of Sambhu and Girjá and Ganes, and exulting greatly, he and all his retinue.

Dohá 352.

Every omen was auspicious ; the gods beat their drums and rained down flowers, while the heavenly nymphs danced for joy and sang jubilant songs of triumph.

Chaupái 352.

Bards, minstrels, rhapsodists, mimes and players chanted his glory that irradiates the three spheres. In all ten regions

of the heaven might be heard loud shouts of victory intermingled with the religious intoning of the Veda. All kinds of music played, and gods in heaven and men on earth were alike enraptured. The magnificence of the procession was past all telling, and the joy was more than heart could contain. The citizens made a profound obeisance to the king, and then were gladdened by a sight of Ráma. They scatter around him jewels and vestments, with their eyes full of tears and their body all tremulous with excitement. Their wives move over his head the lustral lights and rejoice greatly to behold the four noble princes ; but when they lifted the curtain of the well-appointed pálki and saw the brides, they were still more glad.

Dohá 353.

In this manner, to the delight of all, they arrived at the gate of the palace, where the glad queens waved the lustral lights over the princes and their brides.

Chaupái 353.

Time after time they perform the ceremony in a rapture of love that is beyond all words. They scatter around in boundless profusion gold and silver ornaments and gems and silks of every kind, and as they gaze on their four sons and their brides, are overwhelmed with the bliss of heaven. Again and again as they regard the beauty of Ráma and Síta, they think with joy that this is the happiest moment of their life. As her companions look again and again into Síta's face they sing and exult over their good fortune. Every moment the gods rain down flowers, midst dancing and singing and obsequious homage. Seeing four such charming couples, Sáradá looked up all her similes, but not one would do ; all seemed unworthy, and she could only stand at gaze enchanted with their loveliness.

Dohá 354.

After performing all the rites prescribed by the Veda or family usage, they conduct their sons and their brides to the

inkling lustral water, spreading carpets in the wing torches.

Chaupái 354.

After seating the brides and their grooms on four thrones so magnificent that they seemed as if made by Love's own hands, they proceeded reverently to lave their sacred feet and to do them homage—all holy as they were—with incense and lights and oblations in accordance with Vedic ritual. Time after time they pass the torch around and wave over their head gorgeous fans and *chauris* and scatter profuse gifts ; for each royal mother was as full of exultation as a devotee who has obtained beatitude ; or a man sick all his life who has gotten an elixir ; or a born beggar who has found the philosopher's stone ; or a blind man restored to sight ; or a dumb man endued with eloquence ; or a warrior who has triumphed in battle.

Dohá 355-56.

Greater by a hundred million times than their joy was the rapture of the queens, when Ráma and his brothers returned home married. As the royal matrons performed the accustomed ceremonies, the brides and their grooms were much confused, but Ráma smiled to himself on beholding their joy and delight.

Chaupái 355.

In due fashion they did homage to the gods and the spirits of their ancestors, and every imagination of the heart was satisfied. Humbly they begged of all the highest boon, namely, the prosperity of Ráma and his brothers, and the gods unseen conferred their blessing. The matrons in their joy took them to their bosom, while the king sent for all who had joined in the procession and gave them carriages and raiment and jewels and ornaments. Then, on receiving permission, and still cherishing the image of Ráma in their heart, they returned in joy each to his own abode. All the people of the city, both men and women, were clad in festal attire, and in every home was a noise of jubilant music.

Anything that a beggar begged was at once bestowed him by the glad king, and every attendant and minstrel band was overwhelmed with gifts and compl

Dohá 357.

All profoundly bowing invoke blessings upon him and sing his praises, as the king with his *guru* and the Bráhmans proceeded to the palace.

Chaupái 356.

Under Vasishtha's directions he reverently performed every ceremony prescribed either by usage or the Veda. The queens, on seeing the throng of Bráhmans, thought themselves most highly favoured and rose to greet them. After bathing their feet and doing them all due homage, the king feasted them at a banquet and loaded them with affectionate civilities and gifts. Grateful at heart, they blessed him at parting. To the son of Gádhi he paid special homage, saying:— 'My lord, there is no man in the world so blest as I am;' and with many other flattering speeches both he and his queens took of the dust of his feet. Next he assigned him a splendid apartment within the palace; the king and his royal consorts alike watching his every wish. Again he adored his lotus feet with the greatest humility and devotion.

Dohá 358.

The princes and their brides, the king and his royal consorts, again and again did reverence to the guru's feet and received the holy man's blessing.

Chaupái 357.

With humility of heart and deep devotion he placed before him his sons and everything that he possessed. But the great saint asked only for the accustomed offering, and invoking upon him every blessing set out with joy on his homeward way, with the image of Ráma and Síta impressed upon his heart. Then he summoned the Bráhmán dames and the elders of the

ants; and next the younger ladies of the house,¹ who too presented with dresses such as each most fancied. Every one with any claim to be remembered received from the jewel of kings suitable remembrance according to his taste, while more dear and honoured friends were overwhelmed with courtesies. The gods, who witnessed Raghubár's marriage, rained down flowers as they applauded the spectacle,

Dohá 359.

and with beat of drum returned each to his own realm; all highly delighted and talking to one another of Ráma's glory with irrepressible rapture.

Chaupái 358.

The king showed every one all possible honour, and with a heart full to overflowing of gladness proceeded to the private apartments, and then gazing upon the princes and their brides took them to his bosom in a rapturous embrace and with a joy beyond all telling. Seating his little daughters in his lap in a most affectionate manner, he again and again caressed them with gladness of heart. All the ladies of the harem were charmed at the sight, and their soul was filled with happiness and exultation, while they listened with delight to the king's account of the marriage and his praises of King Janak's virtue and amiability, and the kindness of his reception and his generous magnificence. The king told it all like a hired encomiast, and the queens were enraptured when they heard of all that had been done.

Dohá 360.

After bathing with his sons the king summoned his guru's kinsmen and entertained them at a sumptuous banquet till five hours of the night were spent.

Chaupái 359.

Lovely women sang joyous songs, and the night was one of exquisite happiness. As they rose from their seats, all were

¹ The *suvariní* in a Hindu marriage takes much the same place as a bridesmaid in the west; and the word might be so translated, were it not that it is essential for the *suvariní* to be herself married and with her husband alive.

presented with *pîn* and decorated with beautiful and sweet-scented garlands; then after one more look at Râma and bowing the head they received the royal permission to retire each to his own abode. The display of love and rapturous delight and the beauty of the court at that time was more than could be told by a hundred Sâradâs or Soshnâgs or by the Veda, or Brâhma, or Mahâdeva, or Ganes: how then can I tell it, any more than an earthly serpent could support the world on its head? After showing every one the highest honour, the king in gentle tones addressed the queens:—"The brides are but children, and have come to a strange house; watch over them as closely as the eyelid guards the eye.

Dohâ 361.

Go and put them to bed, for they are tired and sleepy." And so saying he retired to his own couch with his thoughts intent on Râma's feet.

Chaupâi 360.

On hearing the king's kind words, they made ready the bed, which was of gold and set with gems, with various rich coverings as soft and white as the froth of milk, and pillows finer than words can tell. In the jewelled chamber were sweet-scented garlands, and a beautiful canopy flashing with lustrous gems which defied description; no one who had not seen it could imagine it. When they had prepared this exquisite couch, they took up Râma and lovingly laid him down upon it, who again and again had to tell his brothers to leave him before they too retired to rest. On seeing his dark little body, so soft and delicate, the fond mothers cried:—"O my son, how could you kill on the way the terrible monster Târakâ?

Dohâ 362.

How were you able to slay those savage demons, those ferocious warriors, who in battle held no man of any account, the vile Mârîcha and Subâhu and all their host?

ii 361.

It was I, the

my son, that God

averted from you countless calamities, while you and your brother guarded the sacrifice ; and by your guru's blessing you acquired all knowledge. At the touch of the dust of your feet the hermit's wife attained to salvation : the whole world is filled with your glory : in the assembly of princes you broke Siva's bow, though lord as a tortoise-shell or a thunderbolt ; you have won universal glory and renown and Jānaki for your bride, and have now with your brothers returned home married. All your actions are more than human ; it is only by Visvamitra's good favour that you have prospered. To-day my birth into the world has borne fruit, now that I see your moon-like face, my son. The days that were spent without seeing you, God ought not to take into account at all."

Dohā 363.

Rāma in most modest phrase reassured the royal dames, and meditating on the feet of Sambhu and his *guru* and all Brāhmans, he closed his eyes in sleep.

Charupāi 362.

As he slept, his pretty and piquant little mouth gleamed like a red lotus, half closed at eventide. In every house women kept vigil and jested with one another in auspicious wise. The city was so brilliant, nay, so brilliant the night itself that, the queens cried "See, girls, see." The matrons slept with the beauteous brides enfolded in their arms, as lovingly as a serpent would clasp to his bosom the precious jewel from inside its head. At the holy hour of dawn the lord awoke, ere Chanticleer had well begun to crow. Minstrels and bards, proclaimed his praises and the citizens flocked to the gate to do him homage. The four brothers saluted the Brāhamans, the gods, their *guru*, and their father and mother, and gladly received their blessing and while the queens reverentially gazed upon their face advanced with the king to the door.

Dohā 364.

Pure though they were in themselves, they performed

all the customary ablutions and bathed in the holy river. Completed their morning devotions ere they returned to their sire.

Chaupai 363.

The king on seeing them took them to his bosom. Then at his command they gladly seated themselves. The whole court was rejoiced at the sight of Rāma, and accounted their eyes supremely blest. Then came saints Vasishtha and Visvamitra and were conducted to exalted thrones. Father and sons reverently adored their feet, and both the holy men rejoiced as they gazed on Rāma. Vasishtha recited sacred legends, while the monarch and his queens listened. He told with joy in diffuse strain of all the doings of Gādhi's son which surpass even the imagination of the saints. Cried Vāmadeva :—"The tale is true ; its fame has become renowned through the three worlds." All who heard were glad, but in Rāma and Lakshman's heart there was exceeding joy.

Dohā 365.

Thus passed the days in perpetual delight, happiness and festivity ; and the whole of Avadh was full to overflowing with bliss that was ever on the increase.

Chaupai 364.

After calculating an auspicious day, they loosened the string on the wrist with no little solemnity and rejoicing. The gods, beholding the constant succession of delight, were in raptures and begged of Brāhma that they might be born at Avadh. Visvamitra was always wishing to take leave, but was persuaded by Rāma's affectionate entreaties to stay on. Day after day, seeing the king's devotion and the excellence of his nature, the great saint was loud in his praises. When he alluded to his intention to go, the king was greatly moved and would not let him go, saying :—"My

and round with a piece of
— proposed to possess a
the marriage is

that I have is yours, and I, my sons, and my wives and servants; be ever gracious to these boys and allow me to see you." So saying the king with his sons and his ministers fell at his feet, and speech failed his tongue. The monarch invoked upon him every kind of blessing and set forth amidst a display of affection that is past all telling, Ráma and his brothers lovingly escorting him till they received orders to return.

Dohá 366.

The moon of Gádhi's race went on his way rejoicing and praising to himself the beauty of Ráma, the piety of the king and the magnificence of the marriage festivities.

Chaupái 365.

Then Vámadeva, the learned *guru* of the house of Raghu, again told the story of Gádhi's son. As he listened to the saint's high fame, the king thought to himself how efficacious his own good deeds had been. At his command the crowd dispersed, while the king and his sons entered the palace. Everywhere the glory of Ráma's wedding was sung, and his holy fame was diffused through the three worlds. From the day that Ráma brought his wife home, all delight made its home at Avadh. The rejoicings attendant on the lord's marriage were more than the tongue of the serpent king could tell, but knowing the praises of Ráma and Síta to be a mine of auspiciousness and the very life and salvation of the race of poets, I too have tried to sing them, in the hope of thus sanctifying my song.

Chhand 61—62.

For the purpose of sanctifying his song has Tulsi told of Ráma's glory; but the acts of Raghubír are a boundless ocean that no poet can traverse. All pious souls, that devoutly hear or recite the auspicious festivities that accompanied Ráma's investiture with the sacred thread and his marriage, shall by his and Vaidehi's favour attain to everlasting felicity. Blessing on the lord of Himálaya's daughter, from whom

have learnt my song: all who hearken to Hari
 re a constant access of devotion and incomparab
 love of Raghubír's feet, like a flood, extinguish
 fire of covetousness ; and in this assurance Tulsí
 his every thought and word and action Hari's p.

Dohá 367.

The times are evil ; the body is stained with filth : there
 is but one remedy : he only is wise who so thinketh and in
 faith meditates upon Hari.

Sorathá 31—32.

Have a hearty love for Hari's feet, discarding all vanities ;
 much time has been spent in sleep ; awake from the darkness
 of delusion. Whoever with love and reverence listens to the
 tale of Rāma and Sita's marriage shall be happy for ever,
 for Rāma's praises are an unfailing joy.

—o—

[Thus ends the book entitled CHILDHOOD, composed by
 Tulsí Dās for the bestowment of pure wisdom, continence and
 contentedness : being the first descent into 'the holy lake of
 Rāma's deeds', that cleanses from every defilement of the
 world.]

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